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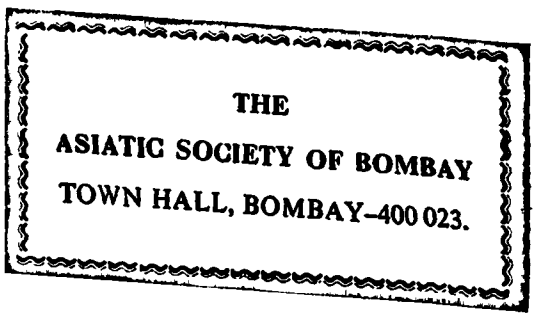

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ROYAL ASIATIC
OF THE
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LIFE AND POEMS

OF THE

REV. GEORGE CRABBE.

VOL. V.

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The Lovers Journey

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LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1834.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF THE

REV. GEORGE CRABBE:

WITH

HIS LETTERS AND JOURNALS,

AND HIS LIFE,

BY HIS SON.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

In this volume the "TALES," originally published in 1812, are concluded; and added to them will be found "FLIRTATION — A DIALOGUE," and various Occasional Pieces, composed in the interval between the completion of the "TALES," and the commencement of the "TALES OF THE HALL."

May 15. 1834.

CONTENTS OF VOL. V.

TALES—*continued.*

		Page
TALE IX.	Arabella - - -	3
TALE X.	The Lover's Journey - -	19
TALE XI.	Edward Shore - -	37
TALE XII.	'Squire Thomas; or, The Precipitate Choice - -	57
TALE XIII.	Jesse and Colin - - -	73
TALE XIV.	The Struggles of Conscience -	95
TALE XV.	Advice; or, The 'Squire and the Priest' - - -	117
TALE XVI.	The Confidant - - -	135
TALE XVII.	Resentment - - -	161
TALE XVIII.	The Wager - - -	183
TALE XIX.	The Convert - - -	197

Page

TALE XX. The Brothers - - - 219

TALE XXI. The Learned Boy - - 237

FLIRTATION, A Dialogue - - - 263

[Now first published.]

OCCASIONAL PIECES.

[Now first published.]

Lines in Laura's Album - - - 285

Lines written at Warwick - - - 287

On a Drawing of the Elm Tree under which the Duke of Wellington stood several Times during the Battle of Waterloo - - - 290

On receiving from a Lady a Present of a Ring - 292

To a Lady, with some Poetical Extracts - - 293

To a Lady, on leaving her at Sidmouth - - 294

To Sarah, Countess of Jersey, on her Birthday - 295

To a Lady who desired some Verses at parting - 296

TALES.

TALE IX.

ARABELLA.

Thrice blessed they that master so their blood —
But earthly happier is the rose distill'd,
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.
Midsummer Night's Dream.

I sometimes do excuse the thing I hate,
For his advantage whom I dearly love.
Measure for Measure.

Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!
Much Ado about Nothing.

TALE IX.

ARABELLA. (1)

Of a fair town where Doctor *Rack* was guide,
His only daughter was the boast and pride;
Wise *Arabella*, yet not wise alone,
She like a bright and polish'd brilliant shone;
Her father own'd her for his prop and stay,
Able to guide, yet willing to obey;
Pleased with her learning while discourse could please,
And with her love in languor and disease:
To every mother were her virtues known,
And to their daughters as a pattern shown;
Who in her youth had all that age requires,
And with her prudence, all that youth admires:
These odious praises made the damsels try
Not to obtain such merits, but deny;
For, whatsoever wise mammas might say,
To guide a daughter, this was not the way;
From such applause disdain and anger rise,
And envy lives where emulation dies.

(1) [A surgeon of Ipswich had an addition to his family just as he had obtained the consent of a young lady to marry him. The breaking off of the match, by the good principle and delicacy of the intended bride, gave rise to much difference of opinion at the time, and suggested this tale.]

In all his strength, contends the noble horse,
With one who just precedes him on the course;
But when the rival flies too far before,
His spirit fails, and he attempts no more.

This reasoning Maid, above her sex's dread,
Had dared to read, and dared to say she read;
Not the last novel, not the new-born play;
Not the mere trash and scandal of the day;
But (though her young companions felt the shock)
She studied Berkeley, Bacon, Hobbes, and Locke:
Her mind within the maze of history dwelt,
And of the moral Muse the beauty felt;
The merits of the Roman page she knew,
And could converse with More (1) and Montagu:
Thus she became the wonder of the town,
From that she reap'd, to that she gave renown,
And strangers coming, all were taught t' admire
The learned lady, and the lofty spire.

Thus Fame in public fix'd the Maid where all
Might throw their darts, and see the idol fall:
A hundred arrows came with vengeance keen,
From tongues envenom'd, and from arms unseen;
A thousand eyes were fix'd upon the place,
That, if she fell, she might not fly disgrace:
But malice vainly throws the poison'd dart,
Unless our frailty shows the peccant part;
And Arabella still preserved her name
Untouch'd, and shone with undisputed fame;

(1) [Hannah More, authoress of "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife," &c. &c. &c. died at the age of eighty-six, in 1833: the celebrated Mrs. Montagu died, aged eighty, in 1800.]

Her very notice some respect would cause,
And her esteem was honour and applause.

Men she avoided; not in childish fear,
As if she thought some savage foe was near;
Not as a prude, who hides that man should seek,
Or who by silence hints that they should speak;
But with discretion all the sex she view'd,
Ere yet engaged pursuing or pursued;
Ere love had made her to his vices blind,
Or hid the favourite's failings from her mind.

Thus was the picture of the man portray'd,
By merit destined for so rare a maid;
At whose request she might exchange her state,
Or still be happy in a virgin's fate: —
He must be one with manners like her own,
His life unquestion'd, his opinions known;
His stainless virtue must all tests endure,
His honour spotless, and his bosom pure;
She no allowance made for sex or times,
Of lax opinion — crimes were ever crimes;
No wretch forsaken must his frailty curse,
No spurious offspring drain his private purse:
He at all times his passions must command,
And yet possess — or be refused her hand.

All this without reserve the maiden told,
And some began to weigh the rector's gold;
To ask what sum a prudent man might gain,
Who had such store of virtues to maintain?

A Doctor *Campbell*, north of Tweed, came forth,
Declared his passion, and proclaim'd his worth;
Not unapproved, for he had much to say
On every cause, and in a pleasant way;
Not all his trust was in a pliant tongue,
His form was good, and ruddy he, and young:
But though the doctor was a man of parts,
He read not deeply male or female hearts;
But judged that all whom he esteem'd as wise
Must think alike, though some assumed disguise;
That every reasoning Bramin, Christian, Jew,
Of all religions took their liberal view;
And of her own, no doubt, this learned Maid
Denied the substance, and the forms obey'd:
And thus persuaded, he his thoughts express'd
Of her opinions, and his own profess'd:
" All states demand this aid, the vulgar need
" Their priests and pray'rs, their sermons and their creed;
" And those of stronger minds should never speak
" (In his opinion) what might hurt the weak:
" A man may smile, but still he should attend
" His hour at church, and be the Church's friend,
" What there he thinks conceal, and what he hears commend."

Frank was the speech, but heard with high disdain,
Nor had the doctor leave to speak again;
A man who own'd, nay gloried in deceit,
" He might despise her, but he should not cheat."

The Vicar *Holmes* appear'd: he heard it said
That ancient men best pleased the prudent maid;
And true it was her ancient friends she loved,
Servants when old she favour'd and approved,
Age in her pious parents she revered,
And neighbours were by length of days endear'd;
But, if her husband too must ancient be,
The good old vicar found it was not he.

On Captain *Bligh* her mind in balance hung—
Though valiant, modest; and reserved, though young:
Against these merits must defects be set—
Though poor, imprudent; and though proud, in debt:
In vain the captain close attention paid;
She found him wanting, whom she fairly weigh'd.

Then came a youth, and all their friends agreed,
That *Edward Huntly* was the man indeed;
Respectful duty he had paid awhile,
Then ask'd her hand, and had a gracious smile:
A lover now declared, he led the fair
To woods and fields, to visits, and to pray'r;
Then whisper'd softly—"Will you name the day?"
She softly whisper'd—"If you love me, stay:"
"Oh! try me not beyond my strength," he cried:
"Oh! be not weak," the prudent Maid replied,
"But by some trial your affection prove—
"Respect and not impatience argues love:
"And love no more is by impatience known,
"Than ocean's depth is by its tempests shown:

" He whom a weak and fond impatience sways,
" But for himself with all his fervour prays,
" And not the maid he woos, but his own will obeys;
" And will she love the being who prefers,
" With so much ardour, his desire to hers?"

Young Edward grieved, but let not grief be seen;
He knew obedience pleased his fancy's queen:
Awhile he waited, and then cried—" Behold!
" The year advancing, be no longer cold!"
For she had promised—" Let the flowers appear,
" And I will pass with thee the smiling year:"
Then pressing grew the youth; the more he press'd,
The less inclined the maid to his request:
" Let June arrive."—Alas! when April came,
It brought a stranger, and the stranger, shame;
Nor could the Lover from his house persuade
A stubborn lass whom he had mournful made;
Angry and weak, by thoughtless vengeance moved,
She told her story to the Fair beloved;
In strongest words th' unwelcome truth was shown,
To blight his prospects, careless of her own.

Our heroine grieved, but had too firm a heart
For him to soften, when she swore to part;
In vain his seeming penitence and pray'r,
His vows, his tears; she left him in despair:
His mother fondly laid her grief aside,
And to the reason of the nymph applied—

" It well becomes thee, lady, to appear,
" But not to be, in very truth, severe;

" Although the crime be odious in thy sight,
" That daring sex is taught such things to slight:
" His heart is thine, although it once was frail;
" Think of his grief, and let his love prevail!"—

" Plead thou no more," the lofty lass return'd;
" Forgiving woman is deceived and spurn'd:
" Say that the crime is common—*shall I take*
" A common man my wedded lord to make?
" See! a weak woman by his arts betray'd,
" An infant born his father to upbraid;
" Shall I forgive his vileness, take his name,
" Sanction his error, and partake his shame?
" No! this assent would kindred frailty prove,
" A love for him would be a vicious love:
" Can a chaste maiden secret counsel hold
" With one whose crime by every mouth is told?
" Forbid it spirit, prudence, virtuous pride;
" He must despise me, were he not denied:
" The way from vice the erring mind to win
" Is with presuming sinners to begin,
" And show, by scorning them, a just contempt for [sin."

The youth repulsed, to one more mild convey'd
His heart, and smiled on the remorseless maid;
The maid, remorseless in her pride, the while
Despised the insult, and return'd the smile.

First to admire, to praise her, and defend,
Was (now in years advanced) a virgin-friend:
Much she preferr'd, she cried, the single state,
" It was her choice"—it surely was her fate;

And much it pleased her in the train to view
A maiden vot'ress, wise and lovely too.

Time to the yielding mind his change imparts,
He varies notions, and he alters hearts;
'Tis right, 'tis just to feel contempt for vice,
But he that shows it may be over-nice:
There are who feel, when young, the false sublime,
And proudly love to show disdain for crime;
To whom the future will new thoughts supply,
The pride will soften, and the scorn will die;
Nay, where they still the vice itself condemn,
They bear the vicious, and consort with them:
Young Captain Grove, when one had changed his side,
Despised the venal turn-coat, and defied;
Old Colonel Grove now shakes him by the hand,
Though he who bribes may still his vote command:
Why would not Ellen to Belinda speak,
When she had flown to London for a week;
And then return'd, to every friend's surprise,
With twice the spirit, and with half the size?
She spoke not then — but, after years had flown,
A better friend had Ellen never known:
Was it the lady her mistake had seen?
Or had she also such a journey been?
No: 'twas the gradual change in human hearts,
That time, in commerce with the world, imparts;
That on the roughest temper throws disguise,
And steals from virtue her asperities.
The young and ardent, who with glowing zeal
Felt wrath for trifles, and were proud to feel,

Now find those trifles all the mind engage,
To soothe dull hours, and cheat the cares of age;
As young Zelinda, in her quaker-dress,
Disdain'd each varying fashion's vile excess,
And now her friends on old Zelinda gaze,
Pleased in rich silks and orient gems to blaze:
Changes like these 'tis folly to condemn,
So virtue yields not, nor is changed with them.

Let us proceed:—Twelve brilliant years were past,
Yet each with less of glory than the last;
Whether these years to this fair virgin gave
A softer mind—effect they often have;
Whether the virgin-state was not so bless'd
As that good maiden in her zeal profess'd;
Or whether lovers falling from her train,
Gave greater price to those she could retain,
Is all unknown;—but Arabella now
Was kindly listening to a Merchant's vow;
Who offer'd terms so fair, against his love
To strive was folly, so she never strove.—
Man in his earlier days we often find
With a too easy and unguarded mind;
But by increasing years and prudence taught,
He grows reserved, and locks up every thought:
Not thus the maiden, for in blooming youth
She hides her thought and guards the tender truth:
This, when no longer young, no more she hides,
But frankly in the favour'd swain confides:
Man, stubborn man, is like the growing tree,
That, longer standing, still will harder be;

And like its fruit, the virgin, first austere,
Then kindly softening with the ripening year.

Now was the lover urgent, and the kind
And yielding lady to his suit inclined:
"A little time, my friend, is just, is right;
"We must be decent in our neighbours' sight:"
Still she allow'd him of his hopes to speak,
And in compassion took off week by week;
Till few remain'd, when, wearied with delay,
She kindly meant to take off day by day.

That female Friend who gave our virgin praise
For flying man and all his treacherous ways,
Now heard with mingled anger, shame, and fear,
Of one accepted, and a wedding near;
But she resolved again with friendly zeal
To make the maid her scorn of wedlock feel;
For she was grieved to find her work undone,
And like a sister mourn'd the failing nun.

Why are these gentle maidens prone to make
Their sister-doves the tempting world forsake?
Why all their triumph when a maid disdains
The tyrant sex, and scorns to wear its chains?
Is it pure joy to see a sister flown
From the false pleasures they themselves have known?
Or do they, as the call-birds in the cage,
Try, in pure envy, others to engage?
And therefore paint their native woods and groves,
As scenes of dangerous joys and naughty loves?

Strong was the maiden's hope; her friend was proud,
And had her notions to the world avow'd;
And, could she find the Merchant weak and frail,
With power to prove it, then she must prevail:
For she aloud would publish his disgrace,
And save his victim from a man so base.

When all inquiries had been duly made,
Came the kind Friend her burthen to unlade —
" Alas! my dear! not all our care and art
" Can thread the maze of man's deceitful heart:
" Look not surprise — nor let resentment swell
" Those lovely features, all will yet be well;
" And thou, from love's and man's deceptions free,
" Wilt dwell in virgin-state, and walk to Heaven with me."

The Maiden frown'd, and then conceived " that wives
" Could walk as well, and lead as holy lives
" As angry prudes who scorn'd the marriage-chain,
" Or luckless maids, who sought it still in vain."

The Friend was vex'd — she paused: at length she cried,
" Know your own danger, then your lot decide;
" That traitor Beswell, while he seeks your hand,
" Has, I affirm, a wanton at command;
" A slave, a creature from a foreign place,
" The nurse and mother of a spurious race;
" Brown ugly bastards — (Heaven the word forgive,
" And the deed punish!) — in his cottage live;

" To town if business calls him, there he stays
" In sinful pleasures wasting countless days;
" Nor doubt the facts, for I can witness call
" For every crime, and prove them one and all."

Here ceased th' informer; Arabella's look
Was like a school-boy's puzzled by his book;
Intent she cast her eyes upon the floor,
Paused — then replied —
" I wish to know no more:
" I question not your motive, zeal, or love,
" But must decline such dubious points to prove —
" All is not true, I judge, for who can guess
" Those deeds of darkness men with care suppress?
" He brought a slave perhaps to England's coast,
" And made her free; it is our country's boast!
" And she perchance too grateful — good and ill
" Were sown at first, and grow together still;
" The colour'd infants on the village green,
" What are they more than we have often seen?
" Children half-clothed who round their village stray,
" In sun or rain, now starved, now beaten, they
" Will the dark colour of their fate betray:
" Let us in Christian love for all account,
" And then behold to what such tales amount."

" His heart is evil," said th' impatient Friend.
" My duty bids me try that heart to mend,"
Replied the virgin — " We may be too nice
" And lose a soul in our contempt of vice;
" If false the charge, I then shall show regard
" For a good man, and be his just reward:

" And what for virtue can I better do
" Than to reclaim him, if the charge be true?"

She spoke, nor more her holy work delay'd;
'Twas time to lend an erring mortal aid:
" The noblest way," she judged, " a soul to win,
" Was with an act of kindness to begin,
" To make the sinner sure, and then t' attack the sin." (1)

(1) As the author's purpose in this tale may be mistaken, he wishes to observe, that conduct like that of the lady's here described must be meritorious or censurable, just as the motives to it are pure or selfish; that these motives may in a great measure be concealed from the mind of the agent; and that we often take credit to our virtue for actions which spring originally from our tempers, inclinations, or our indifference. It cannot therefore be improper, much less immoral, to give an instance of such self-deception.

TALE X.

THE LOVER'S JOURNEY.

The sun is in the heavens, and the proud day,
Attended with the pleasures of the world,
Is all too wanton. — *King John.*

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
Are of imagination all compact.
Midsummer Night's Dream.

Oh! how this spring of love resembleth
Th' uncertain glory of an April day,
Which now shows all her beauty to the sun,
And by and by a cloud takes all away.
Two Gentlemen of Verona.

And happily I have arrived at last
Unto the wished haven of my bliss. — *Taming of the Shrew.*

TALE X.

THE LOVER'S JOURNEY. (1)

It is the Soul that sees; the outward eyes
Present the object, but the Mind descries;
And thence delight, disgust, or cool indiff'rence rise:
When minds are joyful, then we look around,
And what is seen is all on fairy ground;
Again they sicken, and on every view
Cast their own dull and melancholy hue;
Or, if absorb'd by their peculiar cares,
The vacant eye on viewless matter glares,
Our feelings still upon our views attend,
And their own natures to the objects lend;

(1) ["It was in his walks between Aldborough and Beccles, that Mr. Crabbe passed through the very scenery described in the first part of 'The Lover's Journey;' while near Beccles, in another direction, he found the contrast of rich vegetation introduced in the latter part of that tale; nor have I any doubt that the *disappointment* of the story figures out something that, on one of these visits, befell himself, and the feelings with which he received it.

'Gone to a friend, she tells me;—I commend
Her purpose:—means she to a *female friend?*' &c.

For truth compels me to say, that he was by no means free from the less amiable sign of a strong attachment—jealousy."—*Life, ante*, Vol. I. p. 36.]

Sorrow and joy are in their influence sure,
Long as the passion reigns th' effects endure;
But Love in minds his various changes makes,
And clothes each object with the change he takes;
His light and shade on every view he throws,
And on each object, what he feels, bestows.

Fair was the morning, and the month was June,
When rose a Lover;—love awakens soon:
Brief his repose, yet much he dreamt the while
Of that day's meeting, and his *Laura's* smile;
Fancy and love that name assign'd to her,
Call'd Susan in the parish-register;
And he no more was John—his Laura gave
The name *Orlando* to her faithful slave.

Bright shone the glory of the rising day,
When the fond traveller took his favourite way;
He mounted gaily, felt his bosom light,
And all he saw was pleasing in his sight.

"Ye hours of expectation, quickly fly,
"And bring on hours of blest reality;
"When I shall Laura see, beside her stand,
"Hear her sweet voice, and press her yielded hand."

First o'er a barren heath beside the coast
Orlando rode, and joy began to boast.

"This neat low gorse," said he, "with golden bloom,
"Delights each sense, is beauty, is perfume;

" And this gay ling, with all its purple flowers,
" A man at leisure might admire for hours;
" This green-fringed cup-moss has a scarlet tip,
" That yields to nothing but my Laura's lip;
" And then how fine this herbage! men may say
" A heath is barren; nothing is so gay:
" Barren or bare to call such charming scene
" Argues a mind possess'd by care and spleen."

Onward he went, and fiercer grew the heat,
Dust rose in clouds before the horse's feet;
For now he pass'd through lanes of burning sand,
Bounds to thin crops or yet uncultured land;
Where the dark poppy flourish'd on the dry
And sterile soil, and mock'd the thin-set rye.

" How lovely this!" the rapt Orlando said;
" With what delight is labouring man repaid!
" The very lane has sweets that all admire,
" The rambling suckling, and the vigorous brier;
" See! wholesome wormwood grows beside the way,
" Where dew-press'd yet the dog-rose bends the spray;
" Fresh herbs the fields, fair shrubs the banks adorn,
" And snow-white bloom falls flaky from the thorn;
" No fostering hand they need, no sheltering wall,
" They spring uncultured, and they bloom for all."

The Lover rode as hasty lovers ride,
And reach'd a common pasture wild and wide;
Small black-legg'd sheep devour with hunger keen
The meagre herbage, fleshless, lank, and lean;

Such o'er thy level turf, Newmarket! stray,
And there, withother *black-legs* (1), find their prey:
He saw some scatter'd hovels; turf was piled
In square brown stacks; a prospect bleak and wild!
A mill, indeed, was in the centre found,
With short sear herbage withering all around;
A smith's black shed opposed a wright's long shop,
And join'd an inn where humble travellers stop.

" Ay, this is Nature," said the gentle 'Squire;
" This ease, peace, pleasure—who would not admire?
" With what delight these sturdy children play,
" And joyful rustics at the close of day;
" Sport follows labour, on this even space
" Will soon commence the wrestling and the race;
" Then will the village-maidens leave their home,
" And to the dance with buoyant spirits come;
" No affectation in their looks is seen,
" Nor know they what disguise or flattery mean;
" Nor aught to move an envious pang they see,
" Easy their service, and their love is free;
" Hence early springs that love, it long endures,
" And life's first comfort, while they live, ensures:
" They the low roof and rustic comforts prize,
" Nor cast on prouder mansions envying eyes:
" Sometimes the news at yonder town they hear,
" And learn what busier mortals feel and fear;

(1) ["Gamblers, or sharpers, on the turf or in the cock-pit; so called, perhaps, from their appearing generally in boots, or else from game-cocks, whose legs are always black." — GROSE.]

" Secure themselves, although by tales amazed,
" Of towns bombarded and of cities razed;
" As if they doubted, in their still retreat,
" The very news that makes their quiet sweet,
" And their days happy—happier only knows
" He on whom Laura her regard bestows."

On rode Orlando, counting all the while
The miles he pass'd, and every coming mile;
Like all attracted things, he quicker flies,
The place approaching where th' attraction lies;
When next appear'd a *dam*—so call the place—
Where lies a road confined in narrow space;
A work of labour, for on either side
Is level fen, a prospect wild and wide,
With dikes on either hand by ocean's self supplied:
Far on the right the distant sea is seen,
And salt the springs that feed the marsh between;
Beneath an ancient bridge, the straiten'd flood
Rolls through its sloping banks of slimy mud;
Near it a sunken boat resists the tide,
That frets and hurries to th' opposing side;
The rushes sharp, that on the borders grow,
Bend their brown flow'rets to the stream below,
Impure in all its course, in all its progress slow:
Here a grave Flora (1) scarcely deigns to bloom,
Nor wears a rosy blush, nor sheds perfume;

(1) The ditches of a fen so near the ocean are lined with irregular patches of a coarse and stained lava; a muddy sediment rests on the horse-tail and other perennial herbs, which in part conceal the shallowness of the stream; a fat-leaved pale-flowering scurvy-grass appears early in the year, and the razor-edged bull-rush in the summer and autumn. The fen itself has a dark and saline herbage; there are rushes and *arrow-head*, and

The few dull flowers that o'er the place are spread
Partake the nature of their fenny bed;
Here on its wiry stem, in rigid bloom,
Grows the salt lavender that lacks perfume;
Here the dwarf sallows creep, the septfoil harsh,
And the soft slimy mallow of the marsh;
Low on the ear the distant billows sound,
And just in view appears their stony bound;
No hedge nor tree conceals the glowing sun,
Birds, save a wat'ry tribe, the district shun,
Nor chirp among the reeds where bitter waters run.(1)

"Various as beauteous, Nature, is thy face,"
Exclaim'd Orlando: "all that grows has grace;
"All are appropriate—bog, and marsh, and fen,
"Are only poor to undiscerning men;
"Here may the nice and curious eye explore
"How Nature's hand adorns the rushy moor;

---

in a few patches the flakes of the cotton-grass are seen, but more commonly the *sea-aster*,'the dullest of that numerous and hardy genus;,the *thrift*, blue in flower, but withering and remaining withered till the winter scatters it; the *saltwort*, both simple and shrubby; a few kinds of grass changed by their soil and atmosphere, and low plants of two or three denominations undistinguished in a general view of the *scenery*; — such is the vegetation of the fen when it is at a small distance from the ocean; and in this case there arise from it effluvia strong and peculiar, half saline, half putrid, which would be considered by most people as offensive, and by some as dangerous; but there are others to whom singularity of taste or association of ideas has rendered it agreeable and pleasant.

(1) [This picture of a fen is what few other artists would have thought of attempting, and no other than Mr. Crabbe could possibly have executed. The features of the fine country are less perfectly drawn: but what, indeed, could be made of the vulgar fine country of *England*? If Mr. Crabbe had had the good fortune to live among *our* Highland hills, and lakes, and upland woods—our living floods sweeping the forests of pine—our lonely vales and rough copse-covered cliffs; what a delicious picture would his unrivalled powers have enabled him to give to the world.—JEFFREY.]

" Here the rare moss in secret shade is found,
" Here the sweet myrtle of the shaking ground;
" Beauties are these that from the view retire,
" But well repay th' attention they require;
" For these, my Laura will her home forsake,
" And all the pleasures they afford partake."

Again, the country was enclosed, a wide
And sandy road has banks on either side;
Where, lo! a hollow on the left appear'd,
And there a Gipsy-tribe their tent had rear'd;
'Twas open spread, to catch the morning sun,
And they had now their early meal begun,
When two brown boys just left their grassy seat,
The early Trav'ller with their prayers to greet:
While yet Orlando held his pence in hand,
He saw their sister on her duty stand;
Some twelve years old, demure, affected, sly,
Prepared the force of early powers to try;
Sudden a look of languor he descries,
And well-feign'd apprehension in her eyes;
Train'd but yet savage, in her speaking face
He mark'd the features of her vagrant race;
When a light laugh and roguish leer express'd
The vice implanted in her youthful breast:
Forth from the tent her elder brother came,
Who seem'd offended, yet forbore to blame
The young designer, but could only trace
The looks of pity in the Trav'ller's face:
Within, the Father, who from fences nigh
Had brought the fuel for the fire's supply,
Watch'd now the feeble blaze, and stood dejected [by:

On ragged rug, just borrow'd from the bed,
And by the hand of coarse indulgence fed,
In dirty patchwork negligently dress'd,
Reclined the Wife, an infant at her breast;
In her wild face some touch of grace remain'd,
Of vigour palsied and of beauty stain'd;
Her blood-shot eyes on her unheeding mate
Were wrathful turn'd, and seem'd her wants to state,
Cursing his tardy aid—her Mother there
With gipsy-state engross'd the only chair;
Solemn and dull her look; with such she stands,
And reads the milk-maid's fortune in her hands,
Tracing the lines of life; assumed through years,
Each feature now the steady falsehood wears:
With hard and savage eye she views the food,
And grudging pinches their intruding brood;
Last in the group, the worn-out Grandsire sits
Neglected, lost, and living but by fits;
Useless, despised, his worthless labours done,
And half protected by the vicious Son,
Who half supports him; he with heavy glance
Views the young ruffians who around him dance;
And, by the sadness in his face, appears
To trace the progress of their future years:
Through what strange course of misery, vice, deceit,
Must wildly wander each unpractised cheat!
What shame and grief, what punishment and pain,
Sport of fierce passions, must each child sustain—
Ere they like him approach their latter end,
Without a hope, a comfort, or a friend! (1)

(1) [This picture is evidently finished *con amore*, and appears to us to be absolutely perfect, both in its moral and its physical expression.—JEFFREY.]

But this Orlando felt not; "Rogues," said he,
"Doubtless they are, but merry rogues they be;
"They wander round the land, and be it true,
"They break the laws—then let the laws pursue
"The wanton idlers; for the life they live,
"Acquit I cannot, but I can forgive."
This said, a portion from his purse was thrown,
And every heart seem'd happy like his own.

He hurried forth, for now the town was nigh—
"The happiest man of mortal men am I."
Thou art! but change in every state is near,
(So while the wretched hope, the blest may fear);
"Say, where is Laura?"—"That her words must show,"
A lass replied; "read this, and thou shalt know!"

"What, gone!"—her friend insisted—forced to go:—
"Is vex'd, was teased, could not refuse her!—No?"
"But you can follow;" "Yes:" "The miles are few,
"The way is pleasant; will you come?—Adieu!
"Thy Laura!" "No! I feel I must resign
"The pleasing hope, thou hadst been here, if mine:
"A lady was it?—Was no brother there?
"But why should I afflict me, if there were?"
"The way is pleasant;" "What to me the way?
"I cannot reach her till the close of day.
"My dumb companion! is it thus we speed?
"Not I from grief nor thou from toil art freed;

" Still art thou doom'd to travel and to pine,
" For my vexation — What a fate is mine!

" Gone to a friend, she tells me; — I commend
" Her purpose: means she to a female friend?
" By Heaven, I wish she suffer'd half the pain
" Of hope protracted through the day in vain:
" Shall I persist to see th' ungrateful maid?
" Yes, I will see her, slight her, and upbraid:
" What! in the very hour? She knew the time,
" And doubtless chose it to increase her crime."

Forth rode Orlando by a river's side,
Inland and winding, smooth, and full and wide,
That roll'd majestic on, in one soft-flowing tide;
The bottom gravel, flow'ry were the banks,
Tall willows, waving in their broken ranks;
The road, now near, now distant, winding led
By lovely meadows which the waters fed;
He pass'd the way-side inn, the village spire,
Nor stopp'd to gaze, to question, or admire;
On either side the rural mansions stood,
With hedge-row trees, and hills high-crown'd with wood,
And many a devious stream that reach'd the nobler flood.

" I hate these scenes," Orlando angry cried,
" And these proud farmers! yes, I hate their pride:
" See! that sleek fellow, how he strides along,
" Strong as an ox, and ignorant as strong;
" Can yon close crops a single eye detain
" But he who counts the profits of the grain?

" And these vile beans with deleterious smell,
" Where is their beauty? can a mortal tell?
" These deep fat meadows I detest; it shocks
" One's feelings there to see the grazing ox;—
" For slaughter fatted, as a lady's smile
" Rejoices man, and means his death the while.
" Lo! now the sons of labour! every day
" Employ'd in toil, and vex'd in every way;
" Theirs is but mirth assumed, and they conceal,
" In their affected joys, the ills they feel:
" I hate these long green lanes; there's nothing seen
" In this vile country but eternal green;
" Woods! waters! meadows! Will they never end?
" 'T is a vile prospect:—Gone to see a friend!"—

Still on he rode! a mansion fair and tall
Rose on his view—the pride of Loddon Hall:
Spread o'er the park he saw the grazing steer,
The full-fed steed, and herds of bounding deer:
On a clear stream the vivid sunbeams play'd,
Through noble elms, and on the surface made
That moving picture, checker'd light and shade;
Th' attended children, there indulged to stray,
Enjoy'd and gave new beauty to the day;
Whose happy parents from their room were seen
Pleased with the sportive idlers on the green.

" Well!" said Orlando, " and for one so bless'd,
" A thousand reasoning wretches are distress'd;
" Nay, these so seeming glad, are grieving like the rest:

" Man is a cheat—and all but strive to hide
" Their inward misery by their outward pride.
" What do yon lofty gates and walls contain,
" But fruitless means to soothe unconquer'd pain?
" The parents read each infant daughter's smile,
" Formed to seduce, encouraged to beguile;
" They view the boys unconscious of their fate,
" Sure to be tempted, sure to take the bait;
" These will be Lauras, sad Orlandos these—
" There's guilt and grief in all one hears and sees."

Our Trav'ller, lab'ring up a hill, look'd down
Upon a lively, busy, pleasant town;
All he beheld were there alert, alive,
The busiest bees that ever stock'd a hive:
A pair were married, and the bells aloud
Proclaim'd their joy, and joyful seem'd the crowd;
And now proceeding on his way, he spied,
Bound by strong ties, the bridegroom and the bride;
Each by some friends attended, near they drew,
And spleen beheld them with prophetic view.

" Married! nay, mad!" Orlando cried in scorn;
" Another wretch on this unlucky morn:
" What are this foolish mirth, these idle joys?
" Attempts to stifle doubt and fear by noise:
" To me these robes, expressive of delight,
" Foreshow distress, and only grief excite;
" And for these cheerful friends, will they behold
" Their wailing brood in sickness, want, and cold;
" And his proud look, and her soft languid air
" Will—but I spare you—go, unhappy pair!"

And now approaching to the Journey's end,
His anger fails, his thoughts to kindness tend,
He less offended feels, and rather fears t' offend:
Now gently rising, hope contends with doubt,
And casts a sunshine on the views without;
And still reviving joy and lingering gloom
Alternate empire o'er his soul assume;
Till, long perplex'd, he now began to find
The softer thoughts engross the settling mind:
He saw the mansion, and should quickly see
His Laura's self—and angry could he be?
No! the resentment melted all away——
"For this my grief a single smile will pay,"
Our trav'ller cried;—"And why should it offend,
"That one so good should have a pressing friend?
"Grieve not, my heart! to find a favourite guest
"Thy pride and boast—ye selfish sorrows, rest;
"She will be kind, and I again be blest."

While gentler passions thus his bosom sway'd,
He reach'd the mansion, and he saw the maid;
"My Laura!"—"My Orlando!—this is kind;
"In truth I came persuaded, not inclined:
"Our friends' amusement let us now pursue,
"And I to-morrow will return with you."

Like man entranced, the happy Lover stood—
"As Laura wills, for she is kind and good;
"Ever the truest, gentlest, fairest, best—
"As Laura wills, I see her and am blest."

Home went the Lovers through that busy place,
By Loddon Hall, the country's pride and grace;
By the rich meadows where the oxen fed,
Through the green vale that form'd the river's bed;
And by unnumber'd cottages and farms,
That have for musing minds unnumber'd charms;
And how affected by the view of these
Was then Orlando—did they pain or please?

Nor pain nor pleasure could they yield—and why?
The mind was fill'd, was happy, and the eye
Roved o'er the fleeting views, that but appear'd to die.

Alone Orlando on the morrow paced
The well-known road; the gipsy-tent he traced;
The dam high-raised, the reedy dykes between,
The scatter'd hovels on the barren green,
The burning sand, the fields of thin-set rye,
Mock'd by the useless Flora, blooming by;
And last the heath with all its various bloom,
And the close lanes that led the trav'ller home.

Then could these scenes the former joys renew?
Or was there now dejection in the view?—
Nor one or other would they yield—and why?
The mind was absent, and the vacant eye
Wander'd o'er viewless scenes, that but appear'd to die. (1)

(1) ['The Lover's Journey' is a pretty fancy, and well executed;—at least as to the description it contains. A lover takes a long ride to see his mistress; and, passing in full hope and joy through a barren and fenny

country, finds beauty in every thing. Being put out of humour, however, by missing the lady at the end of this stage, he proceeds through a lovely landscape, and finds every thing ugly and disagreeable. At last he meets his fair one — is reconciled — and returns along with her; when the landscape presents neither beauty nor deformity, and excites no emotion whatever in a mind engrossed with more lively sensations. There is nothing in any part of Mr. Crabbe's writings more exquisite than some of the descriptions in this story.' — JEFFREY.]

TALE XI.

EDWARD SHORE.

——— Seem they grave or learned?
Why, so didst thou — Seem they religious?
Why, so didst thou; or are they spare in diet,
Free from gross passion, or of mirth or anger,
Constant in spirit, not swerving with the blood,
Garnish'd and deck'd in modest compliment,
Not working with the eye without the ear,
And but with purged judgment trusting neither?
Such and so finely bolted didst thou seem. — *Henry V.*

——— Better I were distract,
So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs,
And woes by strong imagination lose
The knowledge of themselves. — *Lear.*

TALE XI.

EDWARD SHORE.

GENIUS! thou gift of Heav'n! thou light divine!
Amid what dangers art thou doom'd to shine!
Oft will the body's weakness check thy force,
Oft damp thy vigour, and impede thy course;
And trembling nerves compel thee to restrain
Thy nobler efforts, to contend with pain;
Or Want (sad guest!) will in thy presence come,
And breathe around her melancholy gloom;
To life's low cares will thy proud thought confine,
And make her sufferings, her impatience, thine. (1)

Evil and strong, seducing passions prey
On soaring minds, and win them from their way,

(1) [What Shakspeare says of the course of true love, may be applied to the course of genius. How seldom it runs smooth, — how seldom it finds a free channel! and what obstacles are to be overcome before it can make one, even if it have strength and fortune finally to force its way! To say nothing of the "mute inglorious Miltons," who lie in many a church-yard; — the mighty spirits which have never found opportunities to unfold themselves; — it is but too true that the greatest efforts of learning and industry and intellect have been produced by men who were struggling with difficulties of every kind; — such is the melancholy sum of what the biography of men of genius almost uniformly presents. — SOUTHEY.]

Who then to Vice the subject spirits give,
And in the service of the conqu'ror live;
Like captive Samson making sport for all,
Who fear'd their strength, and glory in their fall.

Genius, with virtue, still may lack the aid
Implored by humble minds, and hearts afraid:
May leave to timid souls the shield and sword
Of the tried Faith, and the resistless Word;
Amid a world of dangers venturing forth,
Frail, but yet fearless, proud in conscious worth,
Till strong temptation, in some fatal time,
Assails the heart, and wins the soul to crime;
When left by honour, and by sorrow spent,
Unused to pray, unable to repent,
The nobler powers that once exalted high
Th' aspiring man, shall then degraded lie:
Reason, through anguish, shall her throne forsake,
And strength of mind but stronger madness make.

When *Edward Shore* had reached his twentieth year,
He felt his bosom light, his conscience clear;
Applause at school the youthful hero gain'd,
And trials there with manly strength sustain'd:
With prospects bright upon the world he came,
Pure love of virtue, strong desire of fame:
Men watch'd the way his lofty mind would take,
And all foretold the progress he would make.

Boast of these friends, to older men a guide,
Proud of his parts, but gracious in his pride;

He bore a gay good-nature in his face,
And in his air were dignity and grace;
Dress that became his state and years he wore,
And sense and spirit shone in Edward Shore.

Thus, while admiring friends the Youth beheld,
His own disgust their forward hopes repell'd;
For he unfix'd, unfixing, look'd around,
And no employment but in seeking found;
He gave his restless thoughts to views refined,
And shrank from worldly cares with wounded mind.

Rejecting trade, awhile he dwelt on laws,
"But who could plead, if unapproved the cause?"(1)
A doubting, dismal tribe physicians seem'd;
Divines o'er texts and disputations dream'd;
War and its glory he perhaps could love,
But there again he must the cause approve.

Our hero thought no deed should gain applause
Where timid virtue found support in laws;
He to all good would soar, would fly all sin,
By the pure prompting of the will within;
"Who needs a law that binds him not to steal?"
Ask'd the young teacher; "can he rightly feel?
"To curb the will, or arm in honour's cause,
"Or aid the weak — are these enforced by laws?
"Should we a foul, ungenerous action dread,
"Because a law condemns th' adulterous bed?
"Or fly pollution, not for fear of stain,
"But that some statute tells us to refrain?

(1) [Servanda, vol. iii. p. 113.]

" The grosser herd in ties like these we bind,
" In virtue's freedom moves th' enlighten'd mind."

" Man's heart deceives him," said a friend.—" Of course,"
Replied the Youth; " but has it power to force?
" Unless it forces, call it as you will,
" It is but wish, and proneness to the ill."

" Art thou not tempted?"—" Do I fall?" said Shore.—
" The pure have fallen."—" Then are pure no more:
" While Reason guides me, I shall walk aright,
" Nor need a steadier hand, or stronger light;
" Nor this in dread of awful threats, design'd
" For the weak spirit and the grov'ling mind;
" But that, engaged by thoughts and views sublime,
" I wage free war with grossness and with crime."
Thus look'd he proudly on the vulgar crew,
Whom statutes govern, and whom fears subdue.

Faith, with his virtue, he indeed profess'd,
But doubts deprived his ardent mind of rest;
Reason, his sovereign mistress, fail'd to show,
Light through the mazes of the world below: (1)
Questions arose, and they surpass'd the skill
Of his sole aid, and would be dubious still;
These to discuss he sought no common guide,
But to the doubters in his doubts applied;

(1) [——" Reason, the power
To guess at right and wrong, the twinkling lamp
Of wand'ring life, that winks and wakes by turns,
Fooling the follower betwixt shade and shining."—CONGREVE.]

When all together might in freedom speak,
And their loved truth with mutual ardour seek.
Alas! though men who feel their eyes decay
Take more than common pains to find their way,
Yet, when for this they ask each other's aid,
Their mutual purpose is the more delay'd:
Of all their doubts, their reasoning clear'd not one,
Still the same spots were present in the sun;
Still the same scruples haunted Edward's mind,
Who found no rest, nor took the means to find.

But though with shaken faith, and slave to fame,
Vain and aspiring on the world he came;
Yet, was he studious, serious, moral, grave,
No passion's victim, and no system's slave:
Vice he opposed, indulgence he disdain'd,
And o'er each sense in conscious triumph reign'd.

Who often reads, will sometimes wish to write,
And Shore would yield instruction and delight:
A serious drama he design'd, but found
'T was tedious travelling in that gloomy ground;
A deep and solemn story he would try,
But grew ashamed of ghosts, and laid it by;
Sermons he wrote, but they who knew his creed,
Or knew it not, were ill disposed to read;
And he would lastly be the nation's guide,
But, studying, fail'd to fix upon a side;
Fame he desired, and talents he possess'd,
But loved not labour, though he could not rest,
Nor firmly fix the vacillating mind,
That, ever working, could no centre find.

'T is thus a sanguine reader loves to trace
The Nile forth rushing on his glorious race;
Calm and secure the fancied traveller goes
Through sterile deserts and by threat'ning foes;
He thinks not then of Afric's scorching sands,
Th' Arabian sea, the Abyssinian bands;
Fasils (1) and Michaels, and the robbers all,
Whom we politely chiefs and heroes call:
He of success alone delights to think,
He views that fount, he stands upon the brink,
And drinks a fancied draught, exulting so to drink.

In his own room, and with his books around,
His lively mind its chief employment found;
Then idly busy, quietly employ'd,
And, lost to life, his visions were enjoy'd:
Yet still he took a keen enquiring view
Of all that crowds neglect, desire, pursue;
And thus abstracted, curious, still, serene,
He unemploy'd, beheld life's shifting scene;
Still more averse from vulgar joys and cares,
Still more unfitted for the world's affairs.

There was a house where Edward ofttimes went,
And social hours in pleasant trifling spent;

(1) Fasil was a rebel chief, and Michael the general of the royal army in Abyssinia, when Mr. Bruce visited that country. In all other respects their characters were nearly similar. They are both represented as cruel and treacherous; and even the apparently strong distinction of loyal and rebellious is in a great measure set aside, when we are informed that Fasil was an open enemy, and Michael an insolent and ambitious controller of the royal person and family.

He read, conversed, and reason'd, sang and play'd,
And all were happy while the idler stay'd;
Too happy one! for thence arose the pain,
Till this engaging trifler came again.

But did he love? We answer, day by day,
The loving feet would take th' accustom'd way,
The amorous eye would rove as if in quest
Of something rare, and on the mansion rest;
The same soft passion touch'd the gentle tongue,
And *Anna*'s charms in tender notes were sung;
The ear, too, seem'd to feel the common flame,
Soothed and delighted with the fair one's name;
And thus as love each other part possess'd,
The heart, no doubt, its sovereign power confess'd,

Pleased in her sight, the Youth required no more;
Not rich himself, he saw the damsel poor;
And he too wisely, nay, too kindly loved,
To pain the being whom his soul approved.

A serious Friend our cautious Youth possess'd,
And at his table sat a welcome guest;
Both unemploy'd, it was their chief delight
To read what free and daring authors write;
Authors who loved from common views to soar,
And seek the fountains never traced before:
Truth they profess'd, yet often left the true
And beaten prospect, for the wild and new.
His chosen friend his fiftieth year had seen,
His fortune easy, and his air serene;

Deist and atheist call'd; for few agreed
What were his notions, principles, or creed;
His mind reposed not, for he hated rest,
But all things made a query or a jest;
Perplex'd himself, he ever sought to prove
That man is doom'd in endless doubt to rove;
Himself in darkness he profess'd to be,
And would maintain that not a man could see.

The youthful Friend, dissentient, reason'd still
Of the soul's prowess, and the subject-will;
Of virtue's beauty, and of honour's force,
And a warm zeal gave life to his discourse:
Since from his feelings all his fire arose,
And he had interest in the themes he chose.

The Friend, indulging a sarcastic smile, [style,
Said—"Dear enthusiast! thou wilt change thy
"When man's delusions, errors, crimes, deceit,
"No more distress thee, and no longer cheat."

Yet, lo! this cautious man, so coolly wise,
On a young Beauty fix'd unguarded eyes;
And her he married: Edward at the view
Bade to his cheerful visits long adieu;
But haply err'd, for this engaging bride
No mirth suppress'd, but rather cause supplied:
And when she saw the friends, by reasoning long,
Confused if right, and positive if wrong,
With playful speech and smile, that spoke delight,
She made them careless both of wrong and right.

This gentle damsel gave consent to wed,
With school and school-day dinners in her head:
She now was promised choice of daintiest food,
And costly dress, that made her sovereign good;
With walks on hilly heath to banish spleen,
And summer-visits when the roads were clean.
All these she loved, to these she gave consent,
And she was married to her heart's content.

Their manner this—the Friends together read,
Till books a cause for disputation bred;
Debate then follow'd, and the vapour'd child
Declared they argued till her head was wild;
And strange to her it was that mortal brain
Could seek the trial, or endure the pain.

Then as the Friend reposed, the younger pair
Sat down to cards, and play'd beside his chair;
Till he awaking, to his books applied,
Or heard the music of th' obedient bride:
If mild the evening, in the fields they stray'd,
And their own flock with partial eye survey'd;
But oft the husband, to indulgence prone,
Resumed his book, and bade them walk alone.

"Do, my kind Edward! I must take mine ease,
"Name the dear girl the planets and the trees;
"Tell her what warblers pour their evening song,
"What insects flutter, as you walk along;
"Teach her to fix the roving thoughts, to bind
"The wandering sense, and methodise the mind."

This was obey'd; and oft when this was done,
They calmly gazed on the declining sun;
In silence saw the glowing landscape fade,
Or, sitting, sang beneath the arbour's shade:
Till rose the moon, and on each youthful face
Shed a soft beauty, and a dangerous grace.

When the young Wife beheld in long debate
The friends, all careless as she seeming sate;
It soon appear'd, there was in one combined
The nobler person, and the richer mind:
He wore no wig, no grisly beard was seen,
And none beheld him careless or unclean;
Or watch'd him sleeping. We indeed have heard
Of sleeping beauty, and it has appear'd;
'T is seen in infants—there indeed we find
The features soften'd by the slumbering mind;
But other beauties, when disposed to sleep,
Should from the eye of keen inspector keep:
The lovely nymph who would her swain surprise,
May close her mouth, but not conceal her eyes;
Sleep from the fairest face some beauty takes,
And all the homely features homelier makes;
So thought our wife, beholding with a sigh
Her sleeping spouse, and Edward smiling by.

A sick relation for the husband sent;
Without delay the friendly sceptic went;
Nor fear'd the youthful pair, for he had seen
The wife untroubled, and the friend serene;
No selfish purpose in his roving eyes,
No vile deception in her fond replies:

So judged the husband, and with judgment true,
For neither yet the guilt or danger knew.

What now remain'd? but they again should play
Th' accustom'd game, and walk th' accustom'd way;
With careless freedom should converse or read,
And the Friend's absence neither fear nor heed:
But rather now they seem'd confused, contrain'd;
Within their room still restless they remain'd,
And painfully they felt, and knew each other pain'd.—
Ah, foolish men! how could ye thus depend,
One on himself, the other on his friend?

The Youth with troubled eye the lady saw,
Yet felt too brave, too daring to withdraw;
While she, with tuneless hand the jarring keys
Touching, was not one moment at her ease:
Now would she walk, and call her friendly guide,
Now speak of rain, and cast her cloke aside,
Seize on a book, unconscious what she read,
And restless still to new resources fled;
Then laugh'd aloud, then tried to look serene;
And ever changed, and every change was seen.

Painful it is to dwell on deeds of shame—
The trying day was past, another came;
The third was all remorse, confusion, dread,
And (all too late!) the fallen hero fled.

Then felt the Youth, in that seducing time,
How feebly Honour guards the heart from crime:

Small is his native strength; man needs the stay,
The strength imparted in the trying day;
For all that Honour brings against the force
Of headlong passion, aids its rapid course;
Its slight resistance but provokes the fire,
As wood-work stops the flame, and then conveys it higher.

The Husband came; a wife by guilt made bold
Had, meeting, soothed him, as in days of old;
But soon this fact transpired; her strong distress,
And his Friend's absence, left him nought to guess.

Still cool, though grieved, thus prudence bade him write—
"I cannot pardon, and I will not fight;
"Thou art too poor a culprit for the laws,
"And I too faulty to support my cause:
"All must be punish'd; I must sigh alone,
"At home thy victim for her guilt atone;
"And thou, unhappy! virtuous now no more,
"Must loss of fame, peace, purity deplore;
"Sinners with praise will pierce thee to the heart,
"And saints deriding, tell thee what thou art."

Such was his fall; and Edward, from that time,
Felt in full force the censure and the crime—
Despised, ashamed; his noble views before,
And his proud thoughts, degraded him the more:
Should he repent—would that conceal his shame?
Could peace be his? It perished with his fame:

Himself he scorn'd, nor could his crime forgive;
He fear'd to die, yet felt ashamed to live:
Grieved, but not contrite was his heart; oppress'd,
Not broken; not converted, but distress'd;
He wanted will to bend the stubborn knee,
He wanted light the cause of ill to see,
To learn how frail is man, how humble then
should be;
For faith he had not, or a faith too weak
To gain the help that humbled sinners seek;
Else had he pray'd—to an offended God
His tears had flown a penitential flood;
Though far astray, he would have heard the call
Of mercy—"Come! return, thou prodigal;"
Then, though confused, distress'd, ashamed, afraid,
Still had the trembling penitent obey'd;
Though faith had fainted, when assail'd by fear,
Hope to the soul had whisper'd, "Persevere!"
Till in his Father's house an humbled guest,
He would have found forgiveness, comfort, rest.

But all this joy was to our Youth denied
By his fierce passions, and his daring pride;
And shame and doubt impell'd him in a course,
Once so abhorr'd, with unresisted force.
Proud minds and guilty, whom their crimes oppress,
Fly to new crimes for comfort and redress;
So found our fallen Youth a short relief
In wine, the opiate guilt applies to grief,—
From fleeting mirth that o'er the bottle lives,
From the false joy its inspiration gives;

And from associates pleased to find a friend,
With powers to lead them, gladden, and defend,
In all those scenes where transient ease is found,
For minds whom sins oppress, and sorrows wound.

Wine is like anger; for it makes us strong,
Blind and impatient, and it leads us wrong;
The strength is quickly lost, we feel the error long:
Thus led, thus strengthen'd, in an evil cause,
For folly pleading, sought the Youth applause;
Sad for a time, then eloquently wild,
He gaily spoke as his companions smiled;
Lightly he rose, and with his former grace
Proposed some doubt, and argued on the case;
Fate and fore-knowledge were his favourite themes—
How vain man's purpose, how absurd his schemes:
"Whatever is, was ere our birth decreed;
"We think our actions from ourselves proceed,
"And idly we lament th' inevitable deed;
"It seems our own, but there 's a power above
"Directs the motion, nay, that makes us move;
"Nor good nor evil can you beings name,
"Who are but rooks and castles in the game;
"Superior natures with their puppets play,
"Till, bagg'd or buried, all are swept away."

Such were the notions of a mind to ill
Now prone, but ardent, and determined still:
Of joy now eager, as before of fame,
And screen'd by folly when assail'd by shame,
Deeply he sank; obey'd each passion's call,
And used his reason to defend them all.

Shall I proceed, and step by step relate
The odious progress of a Sinner's fate?
No — let me rather hasten to the time
(Sure to arrive!) when misery waits on crime.

With Virtue, prudence fled; what Shore possess'd
Was sold, was spent, and he was now distress'd:
And Want, unwelcome stranger, pale and wan,
Met with her haggard looks the hurried man;
His pride felt keenly what he must expect
From useless pity and from cold neglect.

Struck by new terrors, from his friends he fled,
And wept his woes upon a restless bed;
Retiring late, at early hour to rise,
With shrunken features, and with bloodshot eyes:
If sleep one moment closed the dismal view,
Fancy her terrors built upon the true:
And night and day had their alternate woes,
That baffled pleasure, and that mock'd repose;
Till to despair and anguish was consign'd
The wreck and ruin of a noble mind.

Now seized for debt, and lodged within a jail,
He tried his friendships, and he found them fail;
Then fail'd his spirits, and his thoughts were all
Fix'd on his sins, his sufferings, and his fall:
His ruffled mind was pictured in his face,
Once the fair seat of dignity and grace:
Great was the danger of a man so prone
To think of madness, and to think alone;

Yet pride still lived, and struggled to sustain
The drooping spirit, and the roving brain:
But this too fail'd: a Friend his freedom gave,
And sent him help the threat'ning world to brave;
Gave solid counsel what to seek or flee,
But still would stranger to his person be:
In vain! the truth determined to explore,
He traced the Friend whom he had wrong'd before.

This was too much; both aided and advised
By one who shunn'd him, pitied, and despised:
He bore it not; 't was a deciding stroke,
And on his reason like a torrent broke:
In dreadful stillness he appear'd awhile,
With vacant horror and a ghastly smile;
Then rose at once into the frantic rage,
That force controll'd not, nor could love assuage.

Friends now appear'd, but in the Man was seen
The angry Maniac, with vindictive mien;
Too late their pity gave to care and skill
The hurried mind and ever-wandering will;
Unnoticed pass'd all time, and not a ray
Of reason broke on his benighted way;
But now he spurn'd the straw in pure disdain,
And now laugh'd loudly at the clinking chain.

Then as its wrath subsided, by degrees
The mind sank slowly to infantine ease;
To playful folly, and to causeless joy,
Speech without aim, and without end, employ;

He drew fantastic figures on the wall,
And gave some wild relation of them all;
With brutal shape he join'd the human face,
And idiot smiles approved the motley race.

Harmless at length th' unhappy man was found,
The spirit settled, but the reason drown'd;
And all the dreadful tempest died away,
To the dull stillness of the misty day.

—

And now his freedom he attain'd, — if free
The lost to reason, truth, and hope, can be;
His friends, or wearied with the charge, or sure
The harmless wretch was now beyond a cure,
Gave him to wander where he pleased, and find
His own resources for the eager mind:
The playful children of the place he meets,
Playful with them he rambles through the streets;
In all they need, his stronger arm he lends,
And his lost mind to these approving friends.

That gentle Maid, whom once the Youth had loved,
Is now with mild religious pity moved;
Kindly she chides his boyish flights, while he
Will for a moment fix'd and pensive be;
And as she trembling speaks, his lively eyes
Explore her looks, he listens to her sighs;
Charm'd by her voice, th' harmonious sounds invade
His clouded mind, and for a time persuade:
Like a pleased infant, who has newly caught
From the maternal glance a gleam of thought:

He stands enrapt, the half known voice to hear,
And starts, half conscious, at the falling tear.

Rarely from town, nor then unwatch'd, he goes,
In darker mood, as if to hide his woes;
Returning soon, he with impatience seeks
His youthful friends, and shouts, and sings, and speaks;
Speaks a wild speech with action all as wild —
The children's leader, and himself a child;
He spins their top, or, at their bidding, bends
His back, while o'er it leap his laughing friends;
Simple and weak, he acts the boy once more,
And heedless children call him *Silly Shore.* (1)

(1) [This tale contains many passages of exquisite beauty. The hero is a young man of aspiring genius and enthusiastic temper, with an ardent love of virtue, but no settled principles either of conduct or opinion. He first conceives an attachment for an amiable girl, who is captivated with his conversation;—but being too poor to marry, soon comes to spend more of his time in the family of an elderly sceptic of his acquaintance, who had recently married a young wife, and placed unbounded confidence in her virtue, and the honour of his friend. In a moment of temptation, they abuse this confidence. The husband renounces him with dignified composure; and he falls at once from the romantic pride of his virtue. He then seeks the company of the dissipated and gay; and ruins his health and fortune, without regaining his tranquillity. When in gaol, and miserable, he is relieved by an unknown hand; and traces the benefaction to the friend whose former kindness he had so ill repaid. This humiliation falls upon his proud spirit and shattered nerves with an overwhelming force; and his reason fails beneath it. He is for some time a raving maniac; and then falls into a state of gay and compassionable imbecility, which is described with inimitable beauty in the close of this story. The ultimate downfall of this lofty mind, with its agonising gleams of transitory recollection, form a picture, than which we do not know if the whole range of our poetry, rich as it is in representations of disordered intellect, furnishes any thing more touching, or delineated with more truth and delicacy. — JEFFREY.]

TALE XII.

'SQUIRE THOMAS;

OR,

THE PRECIPITATE CHOICE.

——— Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords in twain,
Too intrinsicate t' unloose ———. — *Lear.*

My other self, my counsel's consistory,
My oracle, my prophet, ———
I as a child will go by thy direction. — *Richard III.*

If I do not have pity upon her, I 'm a villain;
If I do not love her, I am a Jew. — *Much Ado about Nothing.*

Women are soft, mild, pitiable, flexible;
But thou art obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless.
Henry VI.

He must be told of it, and he shall; the office
Becomes a woman best; I 'll take it upon me;
If I prove honey-mouth'd, let my tongue blister.
Winter's Tale.

——— Disguise — I see thou art a wickedness.
Twelfth Night.

TALE XII.

'SQUIRE THOMAS.

'Squire Thomas flatter'd long a wealthy Aunt,
Who left him all that she could give or grant;
Ten years he tried, with all his craft and skill,
To fix the sovereign lady's varying will;
Ten years enduring at her board to sit,
He meekly listen'd to her tales and wit;
He took the meanest office man can take,
And his aunt's vices for her money's sake:
By many a threat'ning hint she waked his fear,
And he was pain'd to see a rival near;
Yet all the taunts of her contemptuous pride
He bore, nor found his grov'ling spirit tried;
Nay, when she wish'd his parents to traduce,
Fawning he smiled, and justice call'd th' abuse:
"They taught you nothing; are you not, at best,"
Said the proud Dame, "a trifler, and a jest?
"Confess you are a fool!"—he bow'd and he confess'd.

This vex'd him much, but could not always last:
The dame is buried, and the trial past.

There was a female, who had courted long
Her cousin's gifts, and deeply felt the wrong;
By a vain boy forbidden to attend
The private councils of her wealthy friend,
She vow'd revenge, nor should that crafty boy
In triumph undisturb'd his spoils enjoy:
He heard, he smiled, and when the Will was read,
Kindly dismiss'd the Kindred of the dead;
"The dear deceased," he call'd her, and the crowd
Moved off with curses deep and threat'nings loud.

The Youth retired, and, with a mind at ease,
Found he was rich, and fancied he must please:
He might have pleased, and to his comfort found
The wife he wish'd, if he had sought around;
For there were lasses of his own degree,
With no more hatred to the state than he:
But he had courted spleen and age so long,
His heart refused to woo the fair and young;
So long attended on caprice and whim,
He thought attention now was due to him;
And as his flattery pleased the wealthy Dame,
Heir to the wealth, he might the flattery claim;
But this the fair, with one accord, denied,
Nor waved for man's caprice the sex's pride:
There is a season when to them is due
Worship and awe, and they will claim it too:
"Fathers," they cry, "long hold us in their chain,
"Nay, tyrant brothers claim a right to reign;
"Uncles and guardians we in turn obey,
"And husbands rule with ever-during sway;

" Short is the time when lovers at the feet
" Of beauty kneel, and own the slavery sweet;
" And shall we this our triumph, this the aim
" And boast of female power, forbear to claim?
" No! we demand that homage, that respect,
" Or the proud rebel punish and reject."

Our Hero, still too indolent, too nice,
To pay for beauty the accustom'd price,
No less forbore t' address the humbler maid,
Who might have yielded with the price unpaid;
But lived, himself to humour and to please,
To count his money, and enjoy his ease.

It pleased a neighbouring 'squire to recommend,
A faithful youth, as servant to his friend;
Nay, more than servant, whom he praised for parts
Ductile yet strong, and for the best of hearts;
One who might ease him in his small affairs,
With tenants, tradesmen, taxes, and repairs;
Answer his letters, look to all his dues,
And entertain him with discourse and news.

The 'Squire believed, and found the trusted youth
A very pattern for his care and truth;
Not for his virtues to be praised alone,
But for a modest mien and humble tone;
Assenting always, but as if he meant
Only to strength of reasons to assent:
For was he stubborn, and retain'd his doubt,
Till the more subtle 'Squire had forced it out;

" Nay, still was right, but he perceived that strong
" And powerful minds could make the right the wrong."

When the 'Squire's thoughts on some fair damsel dwelt,
The faithful Friend his apprehensions felt;
It would rejoice his faithful heart to find
A lady suited to his master's mind;
But who deserved that master? who would prove
That hers was pure, uninterested love?
Although a servant, he would scorn to take
A countess, till she suffer'd for his sake;
Some tender spirit, humble, faithful, true,
Such, my dear master! must be sought for you.

Six months had pass'd, and not a lady seen,
With just this love, 'twixt fifty and fifteen;
All seem'd his doctrine or his pride to shun,
All would be woo'd, before they would be won;
When the chance naming of a race and fair,
Our 'Squire disposed to take his pleasure there:
The Friend profess'd, " although he first began
" To hint the thing, it seem'd a thoughtless plan;
" The roads, he fear'd, were foul, the days were short,
" The village far, and yet there might be sport."

" What! you of roads and starless nights afraid?
" You think to govern! you to be obey'd!"
Smiling he spoke, the humble Friend declared
His soul's obedience, and to go prepared.

The place was distant, but with great delight
They saw a race, and hail'd the glorious sight:
The 'Squire exulted, and declared the ride
Had amply paid, and he was satisfied.
They gazed, they feasted, and, in happy mood,
Homeward return'd, and hastening as they rode;
For short the day, and sudden was the change
From light to darkness, and the way was strange:
Our hero soon grew peevish, then distress'd;
He dreaded darkness, and he sigh'd for rest:
Going, they pass'd a village; but, alas!
Returning saw no village to repass;
The 'Squire remember'd too a noble hall,
Large as a church, and whiter than its wall:
This he had noticed as they rode along,
And justly reason'd that their road was wrong.
George, full of awe, was modest in reply —
" The fault was his, 'twas folly to deny;
" And of his mater's safety were he sure,
" There was no grievance he would not endure."
This made his peace with the relenting 'Squire,
Whose thoughts yet dwelt on supper and a fire;
When, as they reach'd a long and pleasant green,
Dwellings of men, and next a man, were seen.

" My friend," said George, " to travellers astray
" Point out an inn, and guide us on the way."

The man look'd up; " Surprising! can it be
" My master's son? as I'm alive, 't is he."

" How! Robin," George replied, " and are we near
" My father's house? how strangely things appear! —
" Dear sir, though wanderers, we at last are right:
" Let us proceed, and glad my father's sight:
" We shall at least be fairly lodged and fed,
" I can ensure a supper and a bed;
" Let us this night, as one of pleasure date,
" And of surprise: it is an act of Fate."
" Go on," the 'Squire in happy temper cried;
" I like such blunder! I approve such guide."

They ride, they halt, the Farmer comes in haste,
Then tells his wife how much their house is grâced;
They bless the chance, they praise the lucky son,
That caused the error — Nay! it was not one;
But their good fortune — cheerful grew the 'Squire,
Who found dependents, flattery, wine, and fire;
He heard the jack turn round; the busy dame
Produced her damask; and with supper came
The Daughter, dress'd with care, and full of maiden-shame.

Surprised, our hero saw the air and dress,
And strove his admiration to express;
Nay! felt it too — for *Harriot* was, in truth,
A tall fair beauty in the bloom of youth;
And from the pleasure and surprise, a grace
Adorn'd the blooming damsel's form and face;
Then, too, such high respect and duty paid
By all — such silent reverence in the maid;

Vent'ring with caution, yet with haste, a glance;
Loth to retire, yet trembling to advance,
Appear'd the nymph, and in her gentle guest
Stirr'd soft emotions till the hour of rest:
Sweet was his sleep, and in the morn again
He felt a mixture of delight and pain:
" How fair, how gentle," said the 'Squire, " how
meek,
" And yet how sprightly, when disposed to speak!
" Nature has bless'd her form, and Heaven her
mind,
" But in her favours Fortune is unkind;
" Poor is the maid — nay, poor she cannot prove
" Who is enrich'd with beauty, worth, and love."

The 'Squire arose, with no precise intent
To go or stay — uncertain what he meant:
He moved to part — they begg'd him first to dine;
And who could then escape from Love and Wine?
As came the night, more charming grew the Fair,
And seem'd to watch him with a two-fold care:
On the third morn, resolving not to stay,
Though urged by Love, he bravely rode away.

Arrived at home, three pensive days he gave
To feelings fond and meditations grave;
Lovely she was, and, if he did not err,
As fond of him as his fond heart of her;
Still he delay'd, unable to decide,
Which was the master-passion, Love or Pride:
He sometimes wonder'd how his friend could make,
And then exulted in, the night's mistake;

Had she but fortune, " doubtless then," he cried,
" Some happier man had won the wealthy bride."

While thus he hung in balance, now inclined
To change his state, and then to change his mind,—
That careless George dropp'd idly on the ground
A letter, which his crafty master found;
The stupid youth confess'd his fault, and pray'd
The generous 'Squire to spare a gentle maid;
Of whom her tender mother, full of fears,
Had written much — " She caught her oft in tears,
" For ever thinking on a youth above
" Her humble fortune — still she own'd not love;
" Nor can define, dear girl! the cherish'd pain,
" But would rejoice to see the cause again:
" That neighbouring youth, whom she endured before,
" She now rejects, and will behold no more;
" Raised by her passion, she no longer stoops
" To her own equals, but she pines and droops,
" Like to a lily, on whose sweets the sun
" Has withering gazed — she saw and was undone:
" His wealth allured her not — nor was she moved
" By his superior state, himself she loved;
" So mild, so good, so gracious, so genteel, —
" But spare your sister, and her love conceal;
" We must the fault forgive, since she the pain must feel."

" Fault!" said the 'Squire, " there's coarseness in the mind
" That thus conceives of feelings so refined;

"Here end my doubts, nor blame yourself, my friend,
"Fate made you careless—here my doubts have end."

The way is plain before us—there is now
The Lover's visit first, and then the vow,
Mutual and fond, the marriage-rite, the Bride
Brought to her home with all a husband's pride:
The 'Squire receives the prize his merits won,
And the glad parents leave the patron-son.

But in short time he saw, with much surprise,
First gloom, then grief, and then resentment rise,
From proud, commanding frowns, and anger-darting eyes:
"Is there in Harriot's humble mind this fire,
"This fierce impatience?" ask'd the puzzled 'Squire;
"Has marriage changed her? or the mask she wore
"Has she thrown by, and is herself once more?"

Hour after hour, when clouds on clouds appear,
Dark and more dark, we know the tempest near;
And thus the frowning brow, the restless form,
And threat'ning glance, forerun domestic storm.
So read the Husband, and, with troubled mind,
Reveal'd his fears—"My Love, I hope you find
"All here is pleasant—but I must confess
"You seem offended, or in some distress;
"Explain the grief you feel, and leave me to redress."

" Leave it to you?" replied the Nymph—
" indeed!
" What! to the cause from whence the ills proceed?
" Good Heaven! to take me from a place, where I
" Had every comfort underneath the sky;
" And then immure me in a gloomy place,
" With the grim monsters of your ugly race,
" That from their canvass staring, make me dread
" Through the dark chambers, where they hang, to
tread!
" No friend nor neighbour comes to give that joy
" Which all things here must banish or destroy:
" Where is the promised coach? the pleasant ride?
" Oh! what a fortune has a Farmer's bride!
" Your sordid pride has placed me just above
" Your hired domestics—and what pays me? Love!
" A selfish fondness I endure each hour,
" And share unwitness'd pomp, unenvied power;
" I hear your folly, smile at your parade,
" And see your favourite dishes duly made;
" Then am I richly dress'd for you t' admire,
" Such is my duty and my Lord's desire;
" Is this a life for youth, for health, for joy?
" Are these my duties—this my base employ?
" No! to my father's house will I repair,
" And make your idle wealth support me there;
" Was it your wish to have an humble bride
" For bondage thankful? Curse upon your pride!
" Was it a slave you wanted? You shall see,
" That, if not happy, I at least am free:
" Well, sir! your answer:"—silent stood the 'Squire,
As looks a miser at his house on fire;

Where all he deems is vanish'd in that flame,
Swept from the earth his substance and his name;
So, lost to every promised joy of life,
Our 'Squire stood gaping at his angry wife;—
His fate, his ruin, where he saw it vain,
To hope for peace, pray, threaten, or complain;
And thus, betwixt his wonder at the ill
And his despair—there stood he gaping still.

"Your answer, sir!—shall I depart a spot
"I thus detest?"—"Oh, miserable lot!"
Exclaim'd the man. "Go, serpent! nor remain
"To sharpen woe by insult and disdain:
"A nest of harpies was I doom'd to meet;
"What plots, what combinations of deceit!
"I see it now—all plann'd, design'd, contrived;
"Served by that villain—by this fury wived—
"What fate is mine! What wisdom, virtue, truth,
"Can stand, if demons set their traps for youth?
"He lose his way! vile dog! he cannot lose
"The way a villain through his life pursues;
"And thou, deceiver! thou afraid to move,
"And hiding close the serpent in the dove!
"I saw—but, fated to endure disgrace,—
"Unheeding saw, the fury in thy face;
"And call'd it spirit—Oh! I might have found
"Fraud and imposture—all the kindred round!
"A nest of vipers"———

———"Sir, I'll not admit
"These wild effusions of your angry wit:

" Have you that value, that we all should use
" Such mighty arts for such important views?
" Are you such prize—and is my state so fair,
" That they should sell their souls to get me there?
" Think you that we alone our thoughts disguise?
" When in pursuit of some contended prize,
" Mask we alone the heart, and soothe whom we
despise!
" Speak you of craft and subtle schemes, who know
" That all your wealth you to deception owe;
" Who play'd for ten dull years a scoundrel-part,
" To worm yourself into a Widow's heart?
" Now, when you guarded, with superior skill,
" That lady's closet, and preserved her Will,
" Blind in your craft, you saw not one of those
" Opposed by you might you in turn oppose;
" Or watch your motions, and by art obtain
" Share of that wealth you gave your peace to gain?
" Did conscience never——— "

——————— " Cease, tormentor, cease—
" Or reach me poison———let me rest in peace!"

" Agreed—but hear me—let the truth appear:"—
" Then state your purpose—I 'll be calm and
hear."—
" Know then, this wealth, sole object of your care,
" I had some right, without your hand, to share;
" My mother's claim was just—but soon she saw
" Your power, compell'd, insulted, to withdraw:
" 'T was then my father, in his anger, swore
" You should divide the fortune, or restore;

" Long we debated—and you find me now
" Heroic victim to a father's vow;
" Like Jephtha's daughter, but in different state,
" And both decreed to mourn our early fate;
" Hence was my brother servant to your pride,
" Vengeance made him your slave—and me your bride:
" Now all is known—a dreadful price I pay
" For our revenge—but still we have our day;
" All that you love you must with others share,
" Or all you dread from their resentment dare:
" Yet terms I offer—let contention cease;
" Divide the spoil, and let us part in peace."

Our Hero trembling heard—he sat—he rose—
Nor could his motions nor his mind compose;
He paced the room—and, stalking to her side,
Gazed on the face of his undaunted bride;
And nothing there but scorn and calm aversion spied.
He would have vengeance, yet he fear'd the law:
Her friends would threaten, and their power he saw;
" Then let her go:"—but, oh! a mighty sum
Would that demand, since he had let her come;
Nor from his sorrows could he find redress,
Save that which led him to a like distress,
And all his ease was in his wife to see
A wretch as anxious and distress'd as he:
Her strongest wish, the fortune to divide,
And part in peace, his avarice denied;
And thus it happen'd, as in all deceit,
The cheater found the evil of the cheat;

The Husband grieved — nor was the Wife at rest;
Him she could vex, and he could her molest;
She could his passion into frenzy raise,
But when the fire was kindled, fear'd the blaze:
As much they studied, so in time they found
The easiest way to give the deepest wound;
But then, like fencers, they were equal still,
Both lost in danger what they gain'd in skill;
Each heart a keener kind of rancour gain'd,
And paining more, was more severely pain'd;
And thus by both were equal vengeance dealt,
And both the anguish they inflicted felt. (1)

(1) [In "'Squire Thomas' we have the history of a mean domineering spirit, who, having secured the succession of a rich relation by assiduous flattery, looks about for some obsequious and yielding fair one, from whom he may exact homage in his turn. He thinks he has found such a one in a lowly damsel in his neighbourhood, and marries her without much premeditation; — when he discovers, to his consternation, not only that she has the spirit of a virago, but that she and her family have decoyed him into the match, to revenge or indemnify themselves for his having run away with the whole inheritance of their common relative. She hopes to bully him into a separate maintenance — but his avarice refuses to buy his peace at such a price; and they continue to live together on a very successful system of mutual tormenting. — JEFFREY.]

TALE XIII.

JESSE AND COLIN.

Then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises, and what they think on their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect. — *Merry Wives of Windsor.*

She hath spoken that she should not, I am sure of that; Heaven knows what she hath known. — *Macbeth.*

Our house is hell, and thou a merry devil.
Merchant of Venice.

And yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit of too much, as they that starve with nothing; it is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean. — *Merchant of Venice.*

TALE XIII.

JESSE AND COLIN.

A VICAR died and left his Daughter poor —
It hurt her not, she was not rich before:
Her humble share of worldly goods she sold,
Paid every debt, and then her fortune told;
And found, with youth and beauty, hope and health,
Two hundred guineas was her worldly wealth;
It then remain'd to choose her path in life,
And first, said *Jesse*, " Shall I be a wife? —
" *Colin* is mild and civil, kind and just,
" I know his love, his temper I can trust;
" But small his farm, it asks perpetual care,
" And we must toil as well as trouble share:
" True, he was taught in all the gentle arts
" That raise the soul, and soften human hearts;
" And boasts a parent, who deserves to shine
" In higher class, and I could wish her mine;
" Nor wants he will his station to improve,
" A just ambition waked by faithful love; —
" Still is he poor — and here my Father's Friend
" Deigns for his Daughter, as her own, to send:

" A worthy lady, who it seems has known
" A world of griefs and troubles of her own:
" I was an infant, when she came, a guest
" Beneath my father's humble roof to rest;
" Her kindred all unfeeling, vast her woes,
" Such her complaint, and there she found repose;
" Enrich'd by fortune, now she nobly lives,
" And nobly, from the blest abundance, gives;
" The grief, the want, of human life, she knows,
" And comfort there and here relief bestows:
" But, are they not dependants?—Foolish pride!
" Am I not honour'd by such friend and guide?
" Have I a home" (here Jesse dropp'd a tear),
" Or friend beside?"—A faithful friend was near.

Now Colin came, at length resolved to lay
His heart before her, and to urge her stay:
True, his own plough the gentle Colin drove,
An humble farmer with aspiring love;
Who, urged by passion, never dared till now,
Thus urged by fears, his trembling hopes avow:
Her father's glebe he managed; every year
The grateful Vicar held the youth more dear;
He saw indeed the prize in Colin's view,
And wish'd his Jesse with a man so true:
Timid as true, he urged with anxious air
His tender hope, and made the trembling prayer;
When Jesse saw, nor could with coldness see,
Such fond respect, such tried sincerity;
Grateful for favours to her father dealt,
She more than grateful for his passion felt;

Nor could she frown on one so good and kind,
Yet fear'd to smile, and was unfix'd in mind;
But prudence placed the Female Friend in view —
What might not one so rich and grateful do?
So lately, too, the good old Vicar died,
His faithful daughter must not cast aside
The signs of filial grief, and be a ready bride:
Thus, led by prudence, to the Lady's seat
The Village-Beauty purposed to retreat;
But, as in hard-fought fields the victor knows
What to the vanquish'd he, in honour, owes,
So, in this conquest over powerful love,
Prudence resolved a generous foe to prove;
And Jesse felt a mingled fear and pain
In her dismission of a faithful swain,
Gave her kind thanks, and when she saw his woe,
Kindly betray'd that she was loth to go;
"But would she promise, if abroad she met
"A frowning world, she would remember yet
"Where dwelt a friend?" — "That could she not
forget."
And thus they parted; but each faithful heart
Felt the compulsion, and refused to part.

Now, by the morning mail the timid Maid
Was to that kind and wealthy Dame convey'd;
Whose invitation, when her father died,
Jesse as comfort to her heart applied;
She knew the days her generous Friend had seen —
As wife and widow, evil days had been;
She married early, and for half her life
Was an insulted and forsaken wife;

Widow'd and poor, her angry father gave,
Mix'd with reproach, the pittance of a slave;
Forgetful brothers pass'd her, but she knew
Her humbler friends, and to their home withdrew:
The good old Vicar to her sire applied
For help, and help'd her when her sire denied;
When in few years Death stalk'd through bower and hall,
Sires, sons, and sons of sons, were buried all:
She then abounded, and had wealth to spare
For softening grief she once was doom'd to share;
Thus train'd in misery's school, and taught to feel,
She would rejoice an orphan's woes to heal:—
So Jesse thought, who look'd within her breast,
And thence conceived how bounteous minds are bless'd.

From her vast mansion look'd the Lady down
On humbler buildings of a busy town;
Thence came her friends of either sex, and all
With whom she lived on terms reciprocal:
They pass'd the hours with their accustom'd ease,
As guests inclined, but not compell'd, to please:
But there were others in the mansion found,
For office chosen, and by duties bound;
Three female rivals, each of power possess'd,
Th' attendant Maid, poor Friend, and kindred-Guest.

To these came Jesse, as a seaman thrown
By the rude storm upon a coast unknown:
The view was flattering, civil seem'd the race,
But all unknown the dangers of the place.

Few hours had pass'd, when, from attendants freed,
The Lady utter'd — " This is kind indeed;
" Believe me, love! that I for one like you
" Have daily pray'd, a friend discreet and true;
" Oh! wonder not that I on you depend,
" You are mine own hereditary friend:
" Hearken, my Jesse, never can I trust
" Beings ungrateful, selfish, and unjust;
" But you are present, and my load of care
" Your love will serve to lighten and to share:
" Come near me, Jesse — let not those below
" Of my reliance on your friendship know;
" Look as they look, be in their freedoms free —
" But all they say, do you convey to me."

Here Jesse's thoughts to Colin's cottage flew,
And with such speed she scarce their absence knew.

" Jane loves her mistress, and should she depart,
" I lose her service, and she breaks her heart;
" My ways and wishes, looks and thoughts, she knows,
" And duteous care by close attention shows:
" But is she faithful? in temptation strong?
" Will she not wrong me? ah! I fear the wrong:
" Your father loved me; now, in time of need,
" Watch for my good, and to his place succeed.

" Blood doesn't bind — that Girl, who every day
" Eats of my bread, would wish my life away;
" I am her *dear relation*, and she thinks
" To make her fortune, an ambitious minx!

" She only courts me for the prospect's sake,
" Because she knows I have a Will to make;
" Yes, love! my Will delay'd, I know not how —
" But you are here, and I will make it now.

" That idle Creature, keep her in your view,
" See what she does, what she desires to do;
" On her young mind may artful villains prey,
" And to my plate and jewels find a way:
" A pleasant humour has the girl; her smile,
" And cheerful manner, tedious hours beguile:
" But well observe her, ever near her be,
" Close in your thoughts, in your professions free.

" Again, my Jesse, hear what I advise,
" And watch a woman ever in disguise;
" *Issop*, that widow, serious, subtle, sly —
" But what of this? — I must have company:
" She markets for me, and although she makes
" Profit, no doubt, of all she undertakes,
" Yet she is one I can to all produce,
" And all her talents are in daily use:
" Deprived of her, I may another find
" As sly and selfish, with a weaker mind:
" But never trust her, she is full of art,
" And worms herself into the closest heart;
" Seem then, I pray you, careless in her sight,
" Nor let her know, my love, how we unite.

" Do, my good Jesse, cast a view around,
" And let no wrong within my house be found;

"That Girl associates with —— I know not who
"Are her companions, nor what ill they do;
"'Tis then the Widow plans, 'tis then she tries
"Her various arts and schemes for fresh supplies:
"'Tis then, if ever, *Jane* her duty quits,
"And, whom I know not, favours and admits:
"Oh! watch their movements all; for me 'tis hard,
"Indeed is vain, but you may keep a guard;
"And I, when none your watchful glance deceive,
"May make my Will, and think what I shall leave."

Jesse, with fear, disgust, alarm, surprise,
Heard of these duties for her ears and eyes;
Heard by what service she must gain her bread,
And went with scorn and sorrow to her bed.

Jane was a servant fitted for her place,
Experienced, cunning, fraudful, selfish, base;
Skill'd in those mean humiliating arts
That make their way to proud and selfish hearts:
By instinct taught, she felt an awe, a fear,
For Jesse's upright, simple character;
Whom with gross flattery she awhile assail'd,
And then beheld with hatred when it fail'd;
Yet trying still upon her mind for hold,
She all the secrets of the mansion told;
And, to invite an equal trust, she drew
Of every mind a bold and rapid view;
But on the widow'd Friend with deep disdain,
And rancorous envy, dwelt the treacherous Jane:—
In vain such arts; without deceit or pride,
With a just taste and feeling for her guide,

From all contagion Jesse kept apart,
Free in her manners, guarded in her heart.

Jesse one morn was thoughtful, and her sigh
The Widow heard as she was passing by; [swain,
And—"Well!" she said, "is that some distant
"Or aught with us, that gives your bosom pain?
"Come, we are fellow-sufferers, slaves in thrall,
"And tasks and griefs are common to us all;
"Think not my frankness strange: they love to paint
"Their state with freedom, who endure restraint;
"And there is something in that speaking eye
"And sober mien, that prove I may rely:
"You came a stranger; to my words attend,
"Accept my offer, and you find a friend;
"It is a labyrinth in which you stray,
"Come, hold my clue, and I will lead the way.

"Good Heav'n! that one so jealous, envious, base,
"Should be the mistress of so sweet a place;
"She, who so long herself was low and poor,
"Now broods suspicious on her useless store;
"She loves to see us abject, loves to deal
"Her insult round, and then pretends to feel:
"Prepare to cast all dignity aside,
"For know your talents will be quickly tried;
"Nor think, from favours past, a friend to gain,
"'Tis but by duties we our posts maintain:
"I read her novels, gossip through the town,
"And daily go, for idle stories, down;

" I cheapen all she buys, and bear the curse
" Of honest tradesmen for my niggard-purse;
" And, when for her this meanness I display,
" She cries, ' I heed not what I throw away;'
" Of secret bargains I endure the shame,
" And stake my credit for our fish and game;
" Oft has she smiled to hear ' her generous soul
" ' Would gladly give, but stoops to my control:'
" Nay! I have heard her, when she chanced to come
" Where I contended for a petty sum,
" Affirm 'twas painful to behold such care,
" ' But Issop's nature is to pinch and spare:'
" Thus all the meanness of the house is mine,
" And my reward—to scorn her, and to dine.

" See next that giddy thing, with neither pride
" To keep her safe, nor principle to guide:
" Poor, idle, simple flirt! as sure as fate
" Her maiden-fame will have an early date:
" Of her beware; for all who live below
" Have faults they wish not all the world to know;
" And she is fond of listening, full of doubt,
" And stoops to guilt to find an error out.

" And now once more observe the artful Maid,
" A lying, prying, jilting, thievish jade;
" I think, my love, you would not condescend
" To call a low, illiterate girl your friend:
" But in our troubles we are apt, you know,
" To lean on all who some compassion show;
" And she has flexile features, acting eyes,
" And seems with every look to sympathise;

" No mirror can a mortal's grief express
" With more precision, or can feel it less;
" That proud, mean spirit, she by fawning courts,
" By vulgar flattery, and by vile reports;
" And, by that proof she every instant gives
" To one so mean, that yet a meaner lives.—

" Come, I have drawn the curtain, and you see
" Your fellow-actors, all our company;
" Should you incline to throw reserve aside,
" And in my judgment and my love confide,
" I could some prospects open to your view,
" That ask attention—and, till then, adieu."

" Farewell!" said Jesse, hastening to her room,
Where all she saw within, without, was gloom:
Confused, perplex'd, she pass'd a dreary hour,
Before her reason could exert its power;
To her all seem'd mysterious, all allied
To avarice, meanness, folly, craft, and pride;
Wearied with thought, she breathed the garden's air,
Then came the laughing Lass, and join'd her there.

" My sweetest friend has dwelt with us a week,
" And does she love us? be sincere and speak;
" My Aunt you cannot—Lord! how I should hate
" To be like her, all misery and state;
" Proud, and yet envious, she disgusted sees
" All who are happy, and who look at ease.
" Let friendship bind us, I will quickly show
" Some favourites near us, you'll be blest to know;

" My aunt forbids it—but, can she expect,
" To soothe her spleen, we shall ourselves neglect?
" Jane and the Widow were to watch and stay
" My free-born feet; I watch'd as well as they;
" Lo! what is this? this simple key explores
" The dark recess that holds the Spinster's stores;
" And, led by her ill star, I chanced to see
" Where Issop keeps her stock of ratafie;
" Used in the hours of anger and alarm,
" It makes her civil, and it keeps her warm:
" Thus bless'd with secrets, both would choose to hide,
" Their fears now grant me what their scorn denied.

" My freedom thus by their assent secured,
" Bad as it is, the place may be endured;
" And bad it is, but her estates, you know,
" And her beloved hoards, she must bestow;
" So we can slyly our amusements take,
" And friends of demons, if they help us, make."

" Strange creatures these," thought Jesse, half inclined
To smile at one malicious and yet kind;
Frank and yet cunning, with a heart to love
And malice prompt—the serpent and the dove;
Here could she dwell? or could she yet depart?
Could she be artful? could she bear with art?—
This splendid mansion gave the cottage grace,
She thought a dungeon was a happier place;
And Colin pleading, when he pleaded best,
Wrought not such sudden change in Jesse's breast.

The wondering maiden, who had only read
Of such vile beings, saw them now with dread;
Safe in themselves—for nature has design'd
The creature's poison harmless to the kind;
But all beside who in the haunts are found
Must dread the poison, and must feel the wound.

Days full of care, slow weary weeks pass'd on,
Eager to go, still Jesse was not gone;
Her time in trifling, or in tears, she spent,
She never gave, she never felt, content:
The Lady wonder'd that her humble guest
Strove not to please, would neither lie nor jest;
She sought no news, no scandal would convey,
But walk'd for health, and was at church to pray;
All this displeased, and soon the Widow cried:
"Let me be frank—I am not satisfied;
"You know my wishes, I your judgment trust;
"You can be useful, Jesse, and you must;
"Let me be plainer, child—I want an ear,
"When I am deaf, instead of mine to hear;
"When mine is sleeping, let your eye awake;
"When I observe not, observation take;
"Alas! I rest not on my pillow laid,
"Then threat'ning whispers make my soul afraid;
"The tread of strangers to my ear ascends,
"Fed at my cost, the minions of my friends;
"While you, without a care, a wish to please,
"Eat the vile bread of idleness and ease."

Th' indignant Girl astonish'd answer'd—"Nay!
"This instant, madam, let me haste away;

" Thus speaks my father's, thus an orphan's friend?
" This instant, lady, let your bounty end."

The Lady frown'd indignant — " What!" she cried,
" A vicar's daughter with a princess' pride!
" And pauper's lot! but pitying I forgive;
" How, simple Jesse, do you think to live?
" Have I not power to help you, foolish maid?
" To my concerns be your attention paid;
" With cheerful mind th' allotted duties take,
" And recollect I have a Will to make."

Jesse, who felt as liberal natures feel,
When thus the baser their designs reveal,
Replied — " Those duties were to her unfit,
" Nor would her spirit to her tasks submit."

In silent scorn the Lady sate awhile,
And then replied with stern contemptuous smile —

" Think you, fair madam, that you came to share
" Fortunes like mine without a thought or care?
" A guest, indeed! from every trouble free,
" Dress'd by my help, with not a care for me;
" When I a visit to your father made,
" I for the poor assistance largely paid;
" To his domestics I their tasks assign'd,
" I fix'd the portion for his hungry hind;
" And had your father (simple man!) obey'd
" My good advice, and watch'd as well as pray'd,

" He might have left you something with his
prayers,
" And lent some colour for these lofty airs.—

" In tears! my love! Oh, then my soften'd
heart
" Cannot resist—we never more will part;
" I need your friendship—I will be your friend,
" And thus determined, to my Will attend."

Jesse went forth, but with determined soul
To fly such love, to break from such control:
" I hear enough," the trembling damsel cried;
" Flight be my care, and Providence my guide;
" Ere yet a prisoner, I escape will make;
" Will, thus display'd, th' insidious arts forsake,
" And, as the rattle sounds, will fly the fatal snake."

Jesse her thanks upon the morrow paid,
Prepared to go, determined though afraid.

" Ungrateful creature," said the Lady, " this
" Could I imagine?—are you frantic, miss?
" What! leave your friend, your prospects—is it
true!"
This Jesse answer'd by a mild " Adieu!"

The Dame replied, " Then houseless may you
rove,
" The starving victim to a guilty love;
" Branded with shame, in sickness doom'd to nurse
" An ill-form'd cub, your scandal and your curse:

" Spurn'd by its scoundrel father, and ill fed
" By surly rustics with the parish-bread!—
" Relent you not?—speak—yet I can forgive;
" Still live with me"—" With you," said Jesse,
" live?
" No! I would first endure what you describe,
" Rather than breathe with your detested tribe;
" Who long have feign'd, till now their very hearts
" Are firmly fix'd in their accursed parts;
" Who all profess esteem, and feel disdain,
" And all, with justice, of deceit complain;
" Whom I could pity, but that, while I stay,
" My terror drives all kinder thoughts away;
" Grateful for this, that, when I think of you,
" I little fear what poverty can do."

The angry matron her attendant Jane
Summon'd in haste to soothe the fierce disdain:

" A vile detested wretch!" the Lady cried,
" Yet shall she be, by many an effort, tried,
" And, clogg'd with debt and fear, against her will
abide;
" And, once secured, she never shall depart
" Till I have proved the firmness of her heart;
" Then when she dares not, would not, cannot go,
" I 'll make her feel what 't is to use me so."

The pensive Colin in his garden stray'd,
But felt not then the beauties it display'd;
There many a pleasant object met his view,
A rising wood of oaks behind it grew;

A stream ran by it, and the village-green
And public road were from the garden seen;
Save where the pine and larch the bound'ry made,
And on the rose-beds threw a softening shade.

The Mother sat beside the garden-door,
Dress'd as in times ere she and hers were poor;
The broad-laced cap was known in ancient days,
When madam's dress compell'd the village praise;
And still she look'd as in the times of old,
Ere his last farm the erring husband sold;
While yet the mansion stood in decent state,
And paupers waited at the well-known gate.

"Alas, my son!" the Mother cried, "and why
"That silent grief and oft-repeated sigh?
"True we are poor, but thou hast never felt
"Pangs to thy father for his error dealt;
"Pangs from strong hopes of visionary gain,
"For ever raised, and ever found in vain.
"He rose unhappy from his fruitless schemes,
"As guilty wretches from their blissful dreams;
"But thou wert then, my son, a playful child,
"Wondering at grief, gay, innocent, and wild;
"Listening at times to thy poor mother's sighs,
"With curious looks and innocent surprise;
"Thy father dying, thou, my virtuous boy,
"My comfort always, waked my soul to joy;
'With the poor remnant of our fortune left,
"Thou hast our station of its gloom bereft:
"Thy lively temper, and thy cheerful air,
' "Have cast a smile on sadness and despair;

" Thy active hand has dealt to this poor space
" The bliss of plenty and the charm of grace;
" And all around us wonder when they find
" Such taste and strength, such skill and power
combined;
" There is no mother, Colin, no not one,
" But envies me so kind, so good a son;
" By thee supported on this failing side,
" Weakness itself awakes a parent's pride:
" I bless the stroke that was my grief before,
" And feel such joy that 't is disease no more;
" Shielded by thee, my want becomes my wealth—
" And soothed by Colin, sickness smiles at health;
" The old men love thee, they repeat thy praise,
" And say, like thee were youth in earlier days;
" While every village-maiden cries, ' How gay,
" ' How smart, how brave, how good is Colin
Grey!'

" Yet art thou sad; alas! my son, I know
" Thy heart is wounded, and the cure is slow;
" Fain would I think that Jesse still may come
" To share the comforts of our rustic home:
" She surely loved thee; I have seen the maid,
" When thou hast kindly brought the Vicar aid—
" When thou hast eased his bosom of its pain,
" Oh! I have seen her—she will come again."

The Matron ceased; and Colin stood the while
Silent, but striving for a grateful smile;
He then replied—" Ah! sure, had Jesse stay'd,
" And shared the comforts of our sylvan shade,

" The tenderest duty and the fondest love
" Would not have fail'd that generous heart to move;
" A grateful pity would have ruled her breast,
" And my distresses would have made me blest.

" But she is gone, and ever has in view
" Grandeur and taste, — and what will then ensue?
" Surprise and then delight in scenes so fair and new;
" For many a day, perhaps for many a week,
" Home will have charms, and to her bosom speak;
" But thoughtless ease, and affluence, and pride,
" Seen day by day, will draw the heart aside:
" And she at length, though gentle and sincere,
" Will think no more of our enjoyments here."

Sighing he spake—but hark! he hears th' approach
Of rattling wheels! and, lo! the evening-coach;
Once more the movement of the horses' feet
Makes the fond heart with strong emotion beat:
Faint were his hopes, but ever had the sight
Drawn him to gaze beside his gate at night;
And when with rapid wheels it hurried by,
He grieved his parent with a hopeless sigh; [sum
And could the blessing have been bought — what
Had he not offer'd, to have Jesse come!

She came—he saw her bending from the door,
Her face, her smile, and he beheld no more;
Lost in his joy—the mother lent her aid
T' assist and to detain the willing Maid;

Who thought her late, her present home to make,
Sure of a welcome for the Vicar's sake:
But the good parent was so pleased, so kind,
So pressing Colin, she so much inclined,
That night advanced; and then so long detain'd,
No wishes to depart she felt, or feign'd;
Yet long in doubt she stood, and then perforce
remain'd.

Here was a lover fond, a friend sincere;
Here was content and joy, for she was here:
In the mild evening, in the scene around,
The Maid, now free, peculiar beauties found;
Blended with village-tones, the evening gale
Gave the sweet night-bird's warblings to the vale;
The Youth embolden'd, yet abash'd, now told
His fondest wish, nor found the maiden cold;
The Mother smiling whisper'd — "Let him go
"And seek the licence!" Jesse answer'd, "No:"
But Colin went. — I know not if they live
With all the comforts wealth and plenty give;
But with pure joy to envious souls denied,
To suppliant meanness and suspicious pride;
And village-maids of happy couples say,
"They live like Jesse Bourn and Colin Grey." (1)

(1) ["Jesse is the orphan of a poor clergyman, who goes, upon her father's death, to live with a rich old lady who had been his friend; and Colin is a young farmer, whose father had speculated away a handsome property; and who, though living in a good degree by his own labour, yet wished the damsel (who half wished it also) to remain and share his humble lot. The rich lady proves to be suspicious, overbearing, and selfish; and sets Jesse upon the ignoble duty of acting the spy and informer over the other dependants of her household; on the delineation of whose characters Mr. Crabbe has lavished a prodigious power of observation and correct

description: — But this not suiting her pure and ingenuous mind, she suddenly leaves the splendid mansion, and returns to her native village, where Colin and his mother soon persuade her to form one of their happy family. There is a great deal of goodheartedness in this tale, and a kind of moral beauty, which has lent more than usual elegance to the simple pictures it presents." — JEFFREY.]

TALE XIV.

THE STRUGGLES OF CONSCIENCE.

I am a Villain; yet I lie, I am not;
Fool! of thyself speak well: — Fool! do not flatter.
My Conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale. — *Richard III.*

My Conscience is but a kind of hard Conscience.... The fiend gives the more friendly counsel. — *Merchant of Venice.*

Thou hast it now — and I fear
Thou play'dst most foully for it. — *Macbeth.*

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Rase out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart? — *Macbeth.*

—— Soft! I did but dream.—
Oh! coward Conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
Richard III.

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TALE XIV.

THE STRUGGLES OF CONSCIENCE.

A SERIOUS Toyman in the city dwelt,
Who much concern for his religion felt;
Reading, he changed his tenets, read again,
And various questions could with skill maintain;
Papist and Quaker if we set aside,
He had the road of every traveller tried;
There walk'd awhile, and on a sudden turn'd
Into some by-way he had just discern'd:
He had a nephew, *Fulham:* — Fulham went
His Uncle's way, with every turn content;
He saw his pious kinsman's watchful care,
And thought such anxious pains his own might spare,
And he the truth obtain'd, without the toil, might share.
In fact, young Fulham, though he little read,
Perceived his uncle was by fancy led;
And smiled to see the constant care he took,
Collating creed with creed, and book with book.

At length the senior fix'd; I pass the sect
He call'd a Church, 'twas precious and elect;
Yet the seed fell not in the richest soil,
For few disciples paid the preacher's toil;
All in an attic-room were wont to meet
These few disciples at their pastor's feet;
With these went Fulham, who, discreet and grave,
Follow'd the light his worthy uncle gave;
Till a warm Preacher found a way t' impart
Awakening feelings to his torpid heart:
Some weighty truths, and of unpleasant kind,
Sank, though resisted, in his struggling mind:
He wish'd to fly them, but compell'd to stay,
Truth to the waking Conscience found her way;—
For though the Youth was call'd a prudent lad,
And prudent was, yet serious faults he had—
Who now reflected—"Much am I surprised;
"I find these notions cannot be despised;
"No! there is something I perceive at last,
"Although my uncle cannot hold it fast;
"Though I the strictness of these men reject,
"Yet I determine to be circumspect:
"This man alarms me, and I must begin
"To look more closely to the things within:
"These sons of zeal have I derided long,
"But now begin to think the laughers wrong;
"Nay! my good uncle, by all teachers moved,
"Will be preferr'd to him who none approved;
"Better to love amiss than nothing to have loved."

Such were his thoughts, when Conscience first began
To hold close converse with th' awaken'd man:
He from that time reserved and cautious grew,
And for his duties felt obedience due;
Pious he was not, but he fear'd the pain
Of sins committed, nor would sin again.
Whene'er he stray'd, he found his Conscience rose,
Like one determined what was ill t' oppose,
What wrong t' accuse, what secret to disclose:
To drag forth every latent act to light,
And fix them fully in the actor's sight:
This gave him trouble, but he still confess'd
The labour useful, for it brought him rest.

The Uncle died, and when the Nephew read
The will, and saw the substance of the dead —
Five hundred guineas, with a stock in trade —
He much rejoiced, and thought his fortune made;
Yet felt aspiring pleasure at the sight,
And for increase, increasing appetite:
Desire of profit idle habits check'd,
(For Fulham's virtue was to be correct);
He and his Conscience had their compact made —
" Urge me with truth, and you will soon persuade;
" But not," he cried, " for mere ideal things
" Give me to feel those terror-breeding stings."

" Let not such thoughts," she said, " your mind confound;
" Trifles may wake me, but they never wound;

" In them indeed there is a wrong and right,
" But you will find me pliant and polite ;
" Not like a Conscience of the dotard kind,
" Awake to dreams, to dire offences blind :
" Let all within be pure, in all beside
" Be your own master, governor, and guide ;
" Alive to danger, in temptation strong,
" And I shall sleep our whole existence long."

" Sweet be thy sleep," said Fulham ; " strong must be
" The tempting ill that gains access to me :
" Never will I to evil deed consent,
" Or, if surprised, oh ! how will I repent !
" Should gain be doubtful, soon would I restore
" The dangerous good, or give it to the poor ;
" Repose for them my growing wealth shall buy —
" Or build—who knows? an hospital like Guy?—([1])
" Yet why such means to soothe the smart within,
" While firmly purposed to renounce the sin ? "

Thus our young Trader and his Conscience dwelt
In mutual love, and great the joy they felt ;
But yet in small concerns, in trivial things,
" She was," he said, " too ready with the stings ;"

(1) ["Guy was originally a bookseller, and inhabited the house which forms the angle between Cornhill and Lombard Street. Being a single man, and very penurious, he soon began to accumulate money. He was seventy-six years of age when he formed the design of building the hospital near St. Thomas's, which bears his name. The charge of erecting this vast pile amounted to 18,793*l.*, besides 219,499*l.* which he left to endow it; and he just lived to see it roofed in. He died in 1724, in his eighty-first year, after having dedicated to charitable purposes more than any other private person upon record in this kingdom."—NICHOLS.]

And he too apt, in search of growing gains,
To lose the fear of penalties and pains:
Yet these, were trifling bickerings, petty jars,
Domestic strifes, preliminary wars;
He ventured little, little she express'd
Of indignation, and they both had rest.

Thus was he fix'd to walk the worthy way,
When profit urged him to a bold essay: —
A time was that when all at pleasure gamed
In lottery chances, yet a law unblamed; (1)
This Fulham tried; who would to him advance
A pound or crown, he gave in turn a chance
For weighty prize — and should they nothing share,
They had their crown or pound in Fulham's ware;
Thus the old stores within the shop were sold
For that which none refuses, new or old.

Was this unjust? yet Conscience could not rest,
But made a mighty struggle in the breast;
And gave th' aspiring man an early proof,
That should they war he would have work enough:
"Suppose," said she, "your vended numbers rise
"The same with those which gain each real prize,
"(Such your proposal), can you ruin shun?"
"A hundred thousand," he replied, "to one."

(1) [The first lottery was sanctioned in 1569. According to Stow, it was begun to be drawn at the west door of St. Paul's cathedral, on the 11th of January, and continued incessantly drawing, day and night, till the 6th of May. Lotteries were abolished by the legislature in 1826.]

46500

" Still it may happen :" " I the sum must pay."
" You know you cannot :" " I can run away."
" That is dishonest :" — " Nay, but you must wink
" At a chance-hit : it cannot be, I think :
" Upon my conduct as a whole decide,
" Such trifling errors let my virtues hide ;
" Fail I at meeting ? am I sleepy there ?
" My purse refuse I with the priest to share ?
" Do I deny the poor a helping hand ?
" Or stop the wicked women in the Strand ?
" Or drink at club beyond a certain pitch ?
" Which are your charges ? Conscience, tell me which ? "

" 'Tis well," said she, " but — " " Nay, I pray, have done :
" Trust me, I will not into danger run."

The lottery drawn, not one demand was made ;
Fulham gain'd profit and increase of trade.
" See now," said he — for Conscience yet arose —
" How foolish 't is such measures to oppose :
" Have I not blameless thus my state advanced ? "
" Still," mutter'd Conscience, " still it might have chanced."
" Might ! " said our hero, " who is so exact
" As to inquire what might have been a fact ? "

Now Fulham's shop contain'd a curious view
Of costly trifles elegant and new :
The papers told where kind mammas might buy
The gayest toys to charm an infant's eye ;

Where generous beaux might gentle damsels please,
And travellers call who cross the land or seas,
And find the curious art, the neat device,
Of precious value and of trifling price.

Here Conscience rested, she was pleased to find
No less an active than an honest mind;
But when he named his price, and when he swore,
His Conscience check'd him, that he ask'd no more,
When half he sought had been a large increase
On fair demand, she could not rest in peace:
(Beside th' affront to call th' adviser in,
Who would prevent, to justify the sin?)
She therefore told him, that "he vainly tried
"To soothe her anger, conscious that he lied;
"If thus he grasp'd at such usurious gains,
"He must deserve, and should expect her pains." (1)

The charge was strong; he would in part confess
Offence there was — But, who offended less?
"What! is a mere assertion call'd a lie?
"And if it be, are men compell'd to buy? [dwell,
"'T was strange that Conscience on such points should
"While he was acting (he would call it) well;
"He bought as others buy, he sold as others sell;

(1) ["——— Still there whispers the small voice within,
Heard through Gain's silence, and o'er Glory's din;
Whatever creed be taught, or land be trod —
Man's conscience is the oracle of God." — BYRON.]

" There was no fraud, and he demanded cause
" Why he was troubled, when he kept the laws?"

" My laws!" said Conscience: " What," said he,
" are thine?
" Oral or written, human or divine?
" Show me the chapter, let me see the text;..
" By laws uncertain subjects are perplex'd:
" Let me my finger on the statute lay,
" And I shall feel it duty to obey."

" Reflect," said Conscience, " 't was your own
desire
" That I should warn you — does the compact
tire?
" Repent you this? then bid me not advise,
" And rather hear your passions as they rise,
" So you may counsel and remonstrance shun,
" But then remember it is war begun;
" And you may judge from some attacks, my friend,
" What serious conflicts will on war attend."

" Nay, but," at length the thoughtful man replied,
" I say not that; I wish you for my guide;
" Wish for your checks and your reproofs — but
then
" Be like a Conscience of my fellow-men;
" Worthy I mean, and men of good report,
" And not the wretches who with conscience sport:
" There's Bice, my friend, who passes off his grease
" Of pigs for bears', in pots a crown apiece;

" His Conscience never checks him when he swears
" The fat he sells is honest fat of bears;
" And so it is, for he contrives to give
" A drachm to each—'tis thus that tradesmen live:
" Now why should you and I be over-nice; (1)
" What man is held in more repute than Bice?"

Here ended the dispute; but yet 'twas plain
The parties both expected strife again:
Their friendship cool'd, he look'd about and saw
Numbers who seem'd unshackled by his awe;
While like a school-boy he was threaten'd still,
Now for the deed, now only for the will;
Here Conscience answer'd, "To thy neighbour's guide
" Thy neighbour leave, and in thine own confide."

Such were each day the charges and replies,
When a new object caught the trader's eyes;
A Vestry-patriot, could he gain the name,
Would famous make him, and would pay the fame:
He knew full well the sums bequeath'd in charge
For schools, for alms-men, for the poor, were large;
Report had told, and he could feel it true,
That most unfairly dealt the trusted few;
No partners would they in their office take,
Nor clear accounts at annual meetings make;

(1) " Why should not Conscience have vacation,
As well as other courts o' th' nation?
Have equal power to adjourn,
Appoint appearance, and return?"— BUTLER.

Aloud our hero in the vestry spoke
Of hidden deeds, and vow'd to draw the cloak;
It was the poor man's cause, and he for one
Was quite determined to see justice done:
His foes affected laughter, then disdain,
They too were loud and threat'ning, but in vain;
The pauper's friend, their foe, arose and spoke again:
Fiercely he cried, "Your garbled statements show
"That you determine we shall nothing know;
"But we shall bring your hidden crimes to light,
"Give you to shame, and to the poor their right."

Virtue like this might some approval ask —
But Conscience sternly said, "You wear a mask!"
"At least," said Fulham, "if I have a view
"To serve myself, I serve the public too."

Fulham, though check'd, retain'd his former zeal,
And this the cautious rogues began to feel:
"Thus will he ever bark," in peevish tone,
An elder cried—"the cur must have a bone:"
They then began to hint, and to begin
Was all they needed—it was felt within;
In terms less veil'd an offer then was made,
Though distant still, it fail'd not to persuade:
More plainly then was every point proposed,
Approved, accepted, and the bargain closed.
The exulting paupers hail'd their Friend's success,
And bade adieu to murmurs and distress.

Alas! their Friend had now superior light,
And, view'd by that, he found that all was right;
"There were no errors, the disbursements small;
"This was the truth, and truth was due to all."

And rested Conscience? No! she would not rest,
Yet was content with making a protest:
Some acts she now with less resistance bore,
Nor took alarm so quickly as before:
Like those in towns besieged, who every ball
At first with terror view, and dread them all;
But, grown familiar with the scenes, they fear
The danger less, as it approaches near;
So Conscience, more familiar with the view
Of growing evils, less attentive grew:
Yet he, who felt some pain and dreaded more,
Gave a peace-offering to the angry poor.

Thus had he quiet—but the time was brief;
From his new triumph sprang a cause of grief;
In office join'd, and acting with the rest,
He must admit the sacramental test.
Now, as a sectary, he had all his life,
As he supposed, been with the Church at strife;—
No rules of hers, no laws had he perused,
Nor knew the tenets he by rote abused;
Yet Conscience here arose more fierce and strong,
Than when she told of robbery and wrong;
"Change his religion! No! he must be sure
"That was a blow no Conscience could endure."

Though friend to Virtue, yet she oft abides
In early notions, fix'd by erring guides;
And is more startled by a call from those,
Than when the foulest crimes her rest oppose;
By error taught, by prejudice misled,
She yields her rights, and Fancy rules instead;
When Conscience all her stings and terror deals,
Not as Truth dictates, but as Fancy feels:
And thus within our hero's troubled breast,
Crime was less torture than the odious test.
New forms, new measures, he must now embrace,
With sad conviction that they warr'd with grace;
To his new church no former friend would come,
They scarce preferr'd her to the church of Rome:
But thinking much, and weighing guilt and gain,
Conscience and he commuted for her pain;
Then promised Fulham to retain his creed,
And their peculiar paupers still to feed;
Their attic-room (in secret) to attend,
And not forget he was *the preacher*'s friend;
Thus he proposed, and Conscience, troubled, tried,
And wanting peace, reluctantly complied.

Now care subdued, and apprehensions gone,
In peace our hero went aspiring on;
But short the period—soon a quarrel rose,
Fierce in the birth, and fatal in the close;
With times of truce between, which rather proved
That both were weary, than that either loved.

Fulham ev'n now disliked the heavy thrall,
And for her death would in his anguish call,
As Rome's mistaken friend exclaim'd, *Let Carthage fall!*
So felt our hero, so his wish express'd,
Against this powerful sprite—*delenda est:*
Rome in her conquest saw not danger near,
Freed from her rival, and without a fear;
So, Conscience conquer'd, men perceive how free,
But not how fatal such a state must be.
Fatal not free our hero's; foe or friend,
Conscience on him was destined to attend:
She dozed indeed, grew dull, nor seem'd to spy
Crime following crime, and each of deeper dye;
But all were noticed, and the reckoning time
With her account came on—crime following crime.(1)

This, once a foe, now Brother in the Trust,
Whom Fulham late described as fair and just,
Was the sole Guardian of a wealthy maid,
Placed in his power, and of his frown afraid:
Not quite an idiot, for her busy brain
Sought, by poor cunning, trifling points to gain;
Success in childish projects her delight,
She took no heed of each important right.

(1) [——"Nam quis
Peccandi finem posuit sibi? Quando recepit
Ejectum semel attritâ de fronte ruborem? &c.—JUVENAL.
——"Never yet
Could sinner to his sin a period set:
When did the flush of modest blood inflame
The cheek, once harden'd to the sense of shame?
Or when the offender, since the birth of time,
Retire, contented with a single crime?"—GIFFORD.]

The friendly parties met—the Guardian cried,
" I am too old; my sons have each a bride:
" Martha, my ward, would make an easy wife;
" On easy terms I'll make her yours for life;
" And then the creature is so weak and mild,
" She may be soothed and threaten'd as a child;"—
" Yet not obey," said Fulham, " for your fools,
" Female and male, are obstinate as mules."

Some points adjusted, these new friends agreed,
Proposed the day, and hurried on the deed.

" 'Tis a vile act," said Conscience:—" It will prove,"
Replied the bolder man, " an act of love;
" Her wicked guardian might the girl have sold
" To endless misery for a tyrant's gold;
" Now may her life be happy—for I mean
" To keep my temper even and serene."
" I cannot thus compound," the spirit cried,
" Nor have my laws thus broken and defied:
" This is a fraud, a bargain for a wife;
" Expect my vengeance, or amend your life."

The Wife was pretty, trifling, childish, weak;
She could not think, but would not cease to speak:
This he forbad—she took the caution ill,
And boldly rose against his sovereign will;
With idiot-cunning she would watch the hour,
When friends were present, to dispute his power:
With tyrant-craft, he then was still and calm,
But raised in private terror and alarm:

By many trials, she perceived how far
To vex and tease, without an open war;
And he discover'd that so weak a mind
No art could lead, and no compulsion bind;
The rudest force would fail such mind to tame,
And she was callous to rebuke and shame;
Proud of her wealth, the power of law she knew,
And would assist him in the spending too:
His threat'ning words with insult she defied,
To all his reasoning with a stare replied;
And when he begg'd her to attend, would say,
"Attend I will—but let me have my way."

Nor rest had Conscience! "While you merit pain
"From me," she cried, "you seek redress in vain."
His thoughts were grievous: "All that I possess
"From this vile bargain adds to my distress;
"To pass a life with one who will not mend,
"Who cannot love, nor save, nor wisely spend,
"Is a vile prospect, and I see no end;
"For if we part, I must of course restore
"Much of her money, and must wed no more.

"Is there no way?"—here Conscience rose in power,
"Oh! fly the danger of this fatal hour;
"I am thy Conscience faithful, fond, and true,
"Ah, fly this thought, or evil must ensue;
"Fall on thy knees, and pray with all thy soul,
"Thy purpose banish, thy design control;
"Let every hope of such advantage cease,
"Or never more expect a moment's peace."

Th' affrighten'd man a due attention paid,
Felt the rebuke, and the command obey'd.

Again the wife rebell'd, again express'd
A love for pleasure—a contempt of rest;
" She whom she pleased would visit, would receive
" Those who pleased her, nor deign to ask for leave."

" One way there is," said he; " I might contrive
" Into a trap this foolish thing to drive:
" Who pleased her, said she?—I'll be certain who—"
" Take heed," said Conscience, " what thou mean'st to do:
" Ensnare thy wife?"—" Why yes," he must confess,
" It might be wrong—but there was no redress;
" Beside, to think," said he, " is not to sin."
" Mistaken man!" replied the power within.

No guest unnoticed to the lady came,
He judged th' event with mingled joy and shame;
Oft he withdrew, and seem'd to leave her free,
But still as watchful as a lynx was he;
Meanwhile the wife was thoughtless, cool, and gay,
And, without virtue, had no wish to stray.

Though thus opposed, his plans were not resign'd;
" Revenge," said he, " will prompt that daring mind;
" Refused supplies, insulted and distress'd,
" Enraged with me, and near a favourite guest—

" Then will her vengeance prompt the daring deed,
" And I shall watch, detect her, and be freed."

There was a Youth—but let me hide the name,
With all the progress of this deed of shame;—
He had his views—on him the husband cast
His net, and saw him in his trammels fast.

" Pause but a moment—think what you intend,"
Said the roused Sleeper: " I am yet a friend;
" Must all our days in enmity be spent?"
" No!" and he paused—" I surely shall repent:"
Then hurried on—the evil plan was laid,
The wife was guilty, and her friend betray'd,
And Fulham gain'd his wish, and for his will was paid.

Had crimes less weighty on the spirit press'd,
This troubled Conscience might have sunk to rest;
And, like a foolish guard, been bribed to peace,
By a false promise, that offence should cease;
Past faults had seem'd familiar to the view,
Confused if many, and obscure though true;
And Conscience, troubled with the dull account,
Had dropp'd her tale, and slumber'd o'er th' amount:
But, struck by daring guilt, alert she rose,
Disturb'd, alarm'd, and could no more repose;
All hopes of friendship, and of peace, were past,
And every view with gloom was overcast.
Hence from that day, that day of shame and sin,
Arose the restless enmity within:

On no resource could Fulham now rely,
Doom'd all expedients, and in vain, to try;
For Conscience, roused, sat boldly on her throne,
Watch'd every thought, attack'd the foe alone,
And with envenom'd sting drew forth the inward groan:
Expedients fail'd that brought relief before,
In vain his alms gave comfort to the poor,
Give what he would, to him the comfort came no more:
Not prayer avail'd, and when (his crimes confess'd)
He felt some ease—she said—"Are they redress'd?
"You still retain the profit, and be sure,
"Long as it lasts, this anguish shall endure."

Fulham still tried to soothe her, cheat, mislead;
But Conscience laid her finger on the deed,
And read the crime with power, and all that must succeed:
He tried t' expel her, but was sure to find
Her strength increased by all that he design'd;
Nor ever was his groan more loud and deep,
Than when refresh'd she rose from momentary sleep.

Now desperate grown, weak, harass'd, and afraid,
From new allies he sought for doubtful aid;
To thought itself he strove to bid adieu,
And from devotions to diversions flew;
He took a poor domestic for a slave,
(Though avarice grieved to see the price he gave);
Upon his board, once frugal, press'd a load
Of viands rich, the appetite to goad;

The long-protracted meal, the sparkling cup,
Fought with his gloom, and kept his courage up:
Soon as the morning came, there met his eyes
Accounts of wealth, that he might reading rise;
To profit then he gave some active hours,
Till food and wine again should renovate his powers:
Yet, spite of all defence, of every aid,
The watchful Foe her close attention paid;
In every thoughtful moment on she press'd,
And gave at once her dagger to his breast;
He waked at midnight, and the fears of sin,
As waters, through a bursten dam, broke in;
Nay, in the banquet, with his friends around,
When all their cares and half their crimes were drown'd,
Would some chance act awake the slumbering fear,
And care and crime in all their strength appear:
The news is read, a guilty victim swings,
And troubled looks proclaim the bosom-stings;
Some pair are wed; this brings the wife in view,
And some divorced: this shows the parting too;
Nor can he hear of evil word or deed,
But they to thought, and thought to sufferings lead.

Such was his life—no other changes came,
The hurrying day, the conscious night the same;
The night of horror—when he starting cried,
To the poor startled sinner at his side:
"Is it in law? am I condemn'd to die?
"Let me escape!——I'll give—oh! let me fly—
"How! but a dream—no judges! dungeon! chain!
"Or these grim men!—I will not sleep again.—

" Wilt thou, dread being! thus thy promise keep?
" Day is thy time — and wilt thou murder sleep?
" Sorrow and want repose, and wilt thou come,
" Nor give one hour of pure untroubled gloom?

" Oh! Conscience! Conscience! man's most faithful friend,
" Him canst thou comfort, ease, relieve, defend;
" But if he will thy friendly checks forego,
" Thou art, oh! wo for me, his deadliest foe!" (1)

(1) ["Conscienza l'assicura,
La buona compagna che l'uom francheggia
Sotto l'usbergo del esser puro." — DANTE.

" He that has light within his own clear breast,
May sit i' th' centre and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon." — MILTON.]

TALE XV.

ADVICE;

OR,

THE 'SQUIRE AND THE PRIEST.

His hours fill'd up with riots, banquets, sports ——
And never noted in him any study,
Any retirement, any sequestration. — *Henry V.*

I will converse with iron-witted fools,
With unrespective boys; none are for me,
Who look into me with considerate eyes. — *Richard III.*

You cram these words into mine ears, against
The stomach of my sense. — *Tempest.*

TALE XV.

THE 'SQUIRE AND THE PRIEST.

A WEALTHY Lord of far-extended land
Had all that pleased him placed at his command;
Widow'd of late, but finding much relief
In the world's comforts, he dismiss'd his grief;
He was by marriage of his daughters eased,
And knew his sons could marry if they pleased;
Meantime in travel he indulged the boys,
And kept no spy nor partner of his joys.

These joys, indeed, were of the grosser kind,
That fed the cravings of an earthly mind;
A mind that, conscious of its own excess,
Felt the reproach his neighbours would express.
Long at th' indulgent board he loved to sit,
Where joy was laughter, and profaneness wit;
And such the guest and manners of the Hall,
No wedded lady on the 'Squire would call:
Here reign'd a Favourite, and her triumph gain'd
O'er other favourites who before had reign'd;

Reserved and modest seem'd the nymph to be,
Knowing her lord was charm'd with modesty;
For he, a sportsman keen, the more enjoy'd,
The greater value had the thing destroy'd.

Our 'Squire declared, that, from a wife released,
He would no more give trouble to a Priest;
Seem'd it not, then, ungrateful and unkind,
That he should trouble from the priesthood find?
The Church he honour'd, and he gave the due
And full respect to every son he knew;
But envied those who had the luck to meet
A gentle pastor, civil, and discreet;
Who never bold and hostile sermon penn'd,
To wound a sinner, or to shame a friend;
One whom no being either shunn'd or fear'd,
Such must be loved wherever they appear'd.

Not such the stern old Rector of the time,
Who soothed no culprit, and who spared no crime;
Who would his fears and his contempt express
For irreligion and licentiousness;
Of him our Village Lord, his guests among,
By speech vindictive proved his feelings stung.

"Were he a bigot," said the 'Squire, "whose zeal
"Condemn'd us all, I should disdain to feel:
"But when a man of parts, in college train'd,
"Prates of our conduct—who would not be pain'd?
"While he declaims (where no one dares reply)
"On men abandon'd, grov'ling in the sty
"(Like beasts in human shape) of shameless luxury.

" Yet with a patriot's zeal I stand the shock
" Of vile rebuke, example to his flock:
" But let this Rector, thus severe and proud,
" Change his wide surplice for a narrow shroud,
" And I will place within his seat a youth,
" Train'd by the Graces to explain the Truth;
" Then shall the flock with gentle hand be led,
" By wisdom won, and by compassion fed."

This purposed Teacher was a sister's son,
Who of her children gave the priesthood one;
And she had early train'd for this employ
The pliant talents of her college-boy:
At various times her letters painted all
Her brother's views — the manners of the Hall;
The rector's harshness, and the mischief made
By chiding those whom preachers should persuade:
This led the youth to views of easy life,
A friendly patron, an obliging wife;
His tithe, his glebe, the garden and the steed,
With books as many as he wish'd to read.

All this accorded with the Uncle's will;
He loved a priest compliant, easy, still;
Sums he had often to his favourite sent,
" To be," he wrote, " in manly freedom spent;
" For well it pleased his spirit to assist
" An honest lad, who scorn'd a Methodist:"
His mother, too, in her maternal care,
Bade him of canting hypocrites beware;
Who from his duties would his heart seduce,
And make his talents of no earthly use.

Soon must a trial of his worth be made—
The ancient priest is to the tomb convey'd;
And the Youth summon'd from a serious friend,
His guide and host, new duties to attend.

Three months before, the nephew and the 'Squire
Saw mutual worth to praise and to admire;
And though the one too early left his wine,
The other still exclaim'd—"My boy will shine:
"Yes, I perceive that he will soon improve,
"And I shall form the very guide I love;
"Decent abroad, he will my name defend,
"And when at home, be social and unbend."

The plan was specious, for the mind of *James*
Accorded duly with his uncle's schemes:
He then aspired not to a higher name
Than sober clerks of moderate talents claim;
Gravely to pray, and rev'rendly to preach,
Was all he saw, good youth! within his reach:
Thus may a mass of sulphur long abide,
Cold and inert, but, to the flame applied,
Kindling it blazes, and consuming turns
To smoke and poison, as it boils and burns.

James, leaving college, to a Preacher stray'd;
What call'd he knew not—but the call obey'd:
Mild, idle, pensive, ever led by those
Who could some specious novelty propose,
Humbly he listen'd, while the preacher dwelt
On touching themes, and strong emotions felt;

And in this night was fix'd that pliant will
To one sole point, and he retains it still.

At first his care was to himself confined;
Himself assured, he gave it to mankind:
His zeal grew active — honest, earnest zeal,
And comfort dealt to him, he long'd to deal;
He to his favourite preacher now withdrew,
Was taught to teach, instructed to subdue;
And train'd for ghostly warfare, when the call
Of his new duties reach'd him from the Hall.

Now to the 'Squire, although alert and stout,
Came unexpected an attack of gout;
And the grieved patron felt such serious pain;
He never thought to see a church again:
Thrice had the youthful rector taught the crowd,
Whose growing numbers spoke his powers aloud,
Before the patron could himself rejoice
(His pain still lingering) in the general voice;
For he imputed all this early fame
To graceful manner, and the well-known name;
And to himself assumed a share of praise,
For worth and talents he was pleased to raise.

A month had flown, and with it fled disease;
What pleased before, began again to please;
Emerging daily from his chamber's gloom,
He found his old sensations hurrying home;
Then call'd his nephew, and exclaim'd, "My boy,
"Let us again the balm of life enjoy;

" The foe has left me, and I deem it right,
" Should he return, to arm me for the fight."

Thus spoke the 'Squire, the favourite nymph stood by,
And viewed the priest with insult in her eye:
She thrice had heard him when he boldly spoke
On dangerous points, and fear'd he would revoke:
For James she loved not — and her manner told,
" This warm affection will be quickly cold:"
And still she fear'd impression might be made
Upon a subject, nervous and decay'd;
She knew her danger, and had no desire
Of reformation in the gallant 'Squire;
And felt an envious pleasure in her breast
To see the rector daunted and distress'd.

Again the Uncle to the youth applied —
" Cast, my dear lad, that cursed gloom aside:
" There are for all things time and place; appear
" Grave in your pulpit, and be merry here:
" Now take your wine — for woes a sure resource,
" And the best prelude to a long discourse."

James half obey'd, but cast an angry eye
On the fair lass, who still stood watchful by;
Resolving thus, " I have my fears — but still
" I must perform my duties, and I will;
" No love, no interest, shall my mind control;
" Better to lose my comforts than my soul;
" Better my uncle's favour to abjure,
" Than the upbraidings of my heart endure."

He took his glass, and then address'd the 'Squire:
" I feel not well, permit me to retire."
The 'Squire conceived that the ensuing day
Gave him these terrors for the grand essay,
When he himself should this young preacher try,
And stand before with him with observant eye;
This raised compassion in his manly breast,
And he would send the rector to his rest:
Yet first, in soothing voice—" A moment stay,
" And these suggestions of a friend obey;
" Treasure these hints, if fame or peace you prize,—
" The bottle emptied, I shall close my eyes.

" On every priest a twofold care attends,
" To prove his talents, and insure his friends:
" First, of the first—your stores at once produce,
" And bring your reading to its proper use:
" On doctrines dwell, and every point enforce
" By quoting much, the scholar's sure resource;
" For he alone can show us on each head
" What ancient schoolmen and sage fathers said:
" No worth has knowledge, if you fail to show
" How well you studied and how much you know:
" Is faith your subject, and you judge it right
" On theme so dark to cast a ray of light;
" Be it that faith the orthodox maintain,
" Found in the rubric, what the creeds explain;
" Fail not to show us on this ancient faith
" (And quote the passage) what some martyr saith:
" Dwell not one moment on a faith that shocks
" The minds of men sincere and orthodox;

" That gloomy faith, that robs the wounded mind
" Of all the comfort it was wont to find
" From virtuous acts, and to the soul denies
" Its proper due for alms and charities;
" That partial faith, that, weighing sins alone,
" Lets not a virtue for a fault atone;
" That starving faith, that would our tables clear,
" And make one dreadful Lent of all the year;
" And cruel too, for this is faith that rends
" Confiding beauties from protecting friends;
" A faith that all embracing, what a gloom
" Deep and terrific o'er the land would come!
" What scenes of horror would that time disclose!
" No sight but misery, and no sound but woes;
" Your nobler faith, in loftier style convey'd,
" Shall be with praise and admiration paid:
" On points like these your hearers all admire
" A preacher's depth, and nothing more require;
" Shall we a studious youth to college send,
" That every clown his words may comprehend?
" 'Tis for your glory, when your hearers own
" Your learning matchless, but the sense unknown.

" Thus honour gain'd, learn now to gain a friend,
" And the sure way is—never to offend;
" For, James, consider—what your neighbours do
" Is their own business, and concerns not you:
" Shun all resemblance to that forward race
" Who preach of sins before a sinner's face;
" And seem as if they overlook'd a pew,
" Only to drag a failing man in view:

" Much should I feel, when groaning in disease,
" If a rough hand upon my limb should seize;
" But great my anger, if this hand were found
" The very doctor's, who should make it sound:
" So feel our minds, young Priest, so doubly feel,
" When hurt by those whose office is to heal.

" Yet of our duties you must something tell,
" And must at times on sin and frailty dwell;
" Here you may preach in easy, flowing style,
" How errors cloud us, and how sins defile:
" Here bring persuasive tropes and figures forth,
" To show the poor that wealth is nothing worth;
" That they, in fact, possess an ample share
" Of the world's good, and feel not half its care;
" Give them this comfort, and, indeed, my gout
" In its full vigour causes me some doubt;
" And let it always, for your zeal, suffice,
" That vice you combat, in the abstract—vice:
" The very captious will be quiet then;
" We all confess we are offending men:
" In lashing sin, of every stroke beware,
" For sinners feel, and sinners you must spare;
" In general satire, every man perceives
" A slight attack, yet neither fears nor grieves;
" But name th' offence, and you absolve the rest,
" And point the dagger at a single breast.

" Yet are there sinners of a class so low,
" That you with safety may the lash bestow;
" Poachers, and drunkards, idle rogues, who feed
" At others' cost, a mark'd correction need:

" And all the better sort, who see your zeal,
" Will love and reverence for their pastor feel;
" Reverence for one who can inflict the smart,
" And love, because he deals them not a part.

" Remember well what love and age advise;
" A quiet rector is a parish prize,
" Who in his learning has a decent pride;
" Who to his people is a gentle guide;
" Who only hints at failings that he sees;
" Who loves his glebe, his patron, and his ease,
" And finds the way to fame and profit is to please."

The Nephew answer'd not, except a sigh
And look of sorrow might be term'd reply;
He saw the fearful hazard of his state,
And held with truth and safety strong debate;
Nor long he reason'd, for the zealous youth
Resolved, though timid, to profess the truth;
And though his friend should like a lion roar,
Truth would he preach, and neither less nor more.

The bells had toll'd—arrived the time of prayer,
The flock assembled, and the 'Squire was there:
And now can poet sing, or proseman say,
The disappointment of that trying day?

As he who long had train'd a favourite steed,
(Whose blood and bone gave promise of his speed),
Sanguine with hope, he runs with partial eye
O'er every feature, and his bets are high;

Of triumph sure, he sees the rivals start,
And waits their coming with exulting heart;
Forestalling glory, with impatient glance,
And sure to see his conquering steed advance;
The conquering steed advances—luckless day!
A rival's *Herod* bears the prize away,
Nor second his, nor third, but lagging last,
With hanging head he comes, by all surpass'd:
Surprise and wrath the owner's mind inflame,
Love turns to scorn, and glory ends in shame;—
Thus waited, high in hope, the partial 'Squire,
Eager to hear, impatient to admire:
When the young Preacher, in the tones that find
A certain passage to the kindling mind,
With air and accent strange, impressive, sad,
Alarm'd the judge—he trembled for the lad;
But when the text announced the power of grace,
Amazement scowl'd upon his clouded face,
At this degenerate son of his illustrious race;
Staring he stood, till hope again arose,
That James might well define the words he chose:
For this he listen'd—but, alas! he found
The preacher always on forbidden ground.

And now the Uncle left the hated pew,
With James, and James's conduct, in his view;
A long farewell to all his favourite schemes!
For now no crazed fanatic's frantic dreams
Seem'd vile as James's conduct, or as James:
All he had long derided, hated, fear'd,
This, from the chosen youth, the uncle heard;—

The needless pause, the fierce disorder'd air,
The groan for sin, the vehemence of prayer,
Gave birth to wrath, that, in a long discourse
Of grace triumphant, rose to fourfold force:
He found his thoughts despised, his rules transgress'd,
And while the anger kindled in his breast,
The pain must be endured that could not be express'd:
Each new idea more inflamed his ire,
As fuel thrown upon a rising fire:
A hearer yet, he sought by threatening sign
To ease his heart, and awe the young divine;
But James refused those angry looks to meet,
Till he dismiss'd his flock, and left his seat:
Exhausted then he felt his trembling frame,
But fix'd his soul,—his sentiments the same;
And therefore wise it seem'd to fly from rage,
And seek for shelter in his parsonage:
There, if forsaken, yet consoled to find
Some comforts left, though not a few resign'd;
There, if he lost an erring parent's love,
An honest conscience must the cause approve;
If the nice palate were no longer fed,
The mind enjoy'd delicious thoughts instead;
And if some part of earthly good was flown,
Still was the tithe of ten good farms his own.

Fear now, and discord, in the village reign,
The cool remonstrate, and the meek complain;
But there is war within, and wisdom pleads in vain
Now dreads the Uncle, and proclaims his dread,
Lest the Boy-priest should turn each rustic head;

The certain converts cost him certain wo,
The doubtful fear lest they should join the foe:
Matrons of old, with whom he used to joke,
Now pass his Honour with a pious look;
Lasses, who met him once with lively airs,
Now cross his way, and gravely walk to prayers:
An old companion, whom he long has loved,
By coward fears confess'd his conscience moved;
As the third bottle gave its spirit forth,
And they bore witness to departing worth,
The friend arose, and he too would depart:—
" Man," said the 'Squire, " thou wert not wont to start;
" Hast thou attended to that foolish boy,
" Who would abridge all comforts, or destroy?"

Yes, he had listen'd, who had slumber'd long,
And was convinced that something must be wrong:
But, though affected, still his yielding heart,
And craving palate, took the Uncle's part;
Wine now oppress'd him, who, when free from wine,
Could seldom clearly utter his design;
But though by nature and indulgence weak,
Yet, half converted, he resolved to speak;
And, speaking, own'd, " that in his mind the Youth
" Had gifts and learning, and that truth was truth:
" The 'Squire he honour'd, and, for his poor part,
" He hated nothing like a hollow heart:
" But 'twas a maxim he had often tried,
" That right was right, and there he would abide;
" He honour'd learning, and he would confess
" The preacher had his talents—more or less:

" Why not agree? he thought the young divine
" Had no such strictness — they might drink and dine;
" For them sufficient — but he said before, —
" That truth was truth, and he would drink no more."

This heard the 'Squire with mix'd contempt and pain;
He fear'd the Priest this recreant sot would gain.
The favourite Nymph, though not a convert made,
Conceived the man she scorn'd her cause would aid,
And when the spirits of her lord were low,
The lass presumed the wicked cause to show:
" It was the wretched life his Honour led,
" And would draw vengeance on his guilty head;
" Their loves (Heav'n knew how dreadfully distress'd
" The thought had made her!) were as yet unbless'd:
" And till the church had sanction'd" — Here she saw
The wrath that forced her trembling to withdraw.

Add to these outward ills, some inward light,
That show 'd him all was not correct and right:
Though now he less indulged — and to the poor,
From day to day, sent alms from door to door;
Though he some ease from easy virtues found,
Yet conscience told him he could not compound;
But must himself the darling sin deny,
Change the whole heart, — but here a heavy sigh
Proclaim'd, " How vast the toil! and ah! how weak am I!"

James too has trouble — he divided sees
A parish, once harmonious and at ease:
With him united are the simply meek,
The warm, the sad, the nervous, and the weak;
The rest his Uncle's, save the few beside,
Who own no doctrine, and obey no guide;
With stragglers of each adverse camp, who lend
Their aid to both, but each in turn offend.

Though zealous still, yet he begins to feel
The heat too fierce, that glows in vulgar zeal;
With pain he hears his simple friends relate
Their week's experience, and their woful state:
With small temptation struggling every hour,
And bravely battling with the tempting power;
His native sense is hurt by strange complaints
Of inward motions in these warring saints;
Who never cast on sinful bait a look,
But they perceive the devil at the hook:
Grieved, yet compell'd to smile, he finds it hard
Against the blunders of conceit to guard;
He sighs to hear the jests his converts cause,
He cannot give their erring zeal applause;
But finds it inconsistent to condemn
The flights and follies he has nursed in them:
These, in opposing minds, contempt produce,
Or mirth occasion, or provoke abuse;
On each momentous theme disgrace they bring,
And give to Scorn her poison and her sting.

TALE XVI.

THE CONFIDANT.

Think'st thou I 'd make a a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon,
With fresh suspicion? — *Othello.*

Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks,
And given my treasure and my rights in thee
To thick-eyed musing and cursed melancholy? — 1 *Henry IV.*

—— It is excellent
To have a giant's strength, but tyrannous
To use it as a giant. — *Measure for Measure.*

TALE XVI.

THE CONFIDANT. (1)

ANNA was young and lovely—in her eye
The glance of beauty, in her cheek the dye;
Her shape was slender, and her features small,
But graceful, easy, unaffected all:
The liveliest tints her youthful face disclosed;
There beauty sparkled, and there health reposed;
For the pure blood that flush'd that rosy cheek
Spoke what the heart forbad the tongue to speak;
And told the feelings of that heart as well,
Nay, with more candour than the tongue could tell:
Though this fair lass had with the wealthy dwelt,
Yet like the damsel of the cot she felt;
And, at the distant hint or dark surmise,
The blood into the mantling cheek would rise.

Now Anna's station frequent terrors wrought
In one whose looks were with such meaning fraught:
For on a Lady, as an humble friend,
It was her painful office to attend.

(1) [The reader will find the tale of "The Confidant" thrown into a little drama of seven scenes, by Mr. Charles Lamb, author of "Elia's Essays," &c. &c. in vol. xxiv. of Blackwood's Magazine, p. 764. The version is so close, that we need not quote specimens of it here; but the whole will certainly reward an attentive perusal. Our wonder is, that so little use has hitherto been made of our Poet's tales, as materials for dramatic composition.]

Her duties here were of the usual kind —
And some the body harass'd, some the mind:
Billets she wrote, and tender stories read,
To make the Lady sleepy in her bed;
She play'd at whist, but with inferior skill,
And heard the summons as a call to drill;
Music was ever pleasant till she play'd
At a request that no request convey'd;
The Lady's tales with anxious looks she heard,
For she must witness what her Friend averr'd;
The Lady's taste she must in all approve,
Hate whom she hated, whom she loved must love;
These, with the various duties of her place,
With care she studied, and perform'd with grace;
She veil'd her troubles in a mask of ease,
And show'd her pleasure was a power to please.

Such were the Damsel's duties; she was poor —
Above a servant, but with service more:
Men on her face with careless freedom gazed,
Nor thought how painful was the glow they raised;
A wealthy few to gain her favour tried,
But not the favour of a grateful bride;
They spoke their purpose with an easy air,
That shamed and frighten'd the dependent fair;
Past time she view'd, the passing time to cheat,
But nothing found to make the present sweet;
With pensive soul she read life's future page,
And saw dependent, poor, repining age.

But who shall dare t' assert what *years* may bring,
When wonders from the passing *hour* may spring?

There dwelt a Yeoman in the place, whose mind
Was gentle, generous, cultivated, kind;
For thirty years he labour'd; fortune then
Placed the mild rustic with superior men:
A richer Stafford who had lived to save,
What he had treasured to the poorer gave;
Who with a sober mind that treasure view'd,
And the slight studies of his youth renew'd:
He not profoundly, but discreetly read,
And a fair mind with useful culture fed;
Then thought of marriage — "But the great," said he,
"I shall not suit, nor will the meaner me:"
Anna he saw, admired her modest air;
He thought her virtuous, and he knew her fair;
Love raised his pity for her humble state,
And prompted wishes for her happier fate;
No pride in money would his feelings wound,
Nor vulgar manners hurt him and confound:
He then the Lady at the Hall address'd,
Sought her consent, and his regard express'd;
Yet if some cause his earnest wish denied,
He begg'd to know it, and he bow'd and sigh'd;

The Lady own'd that she was loth to part,
But praised the damsel for her gentle heart,
Her pleasing person, and her blooming health;
But ended thus, "Her virtue is her wealth."

"Then is she rich!" he cried, with lively air;
"But whence, so please you, came a lass so fair?"

" A placeman's child was Anna, one who died
" And left a widow by afflictions tried;
" She to support her infant daughter strove,
" But early left the object of her love;
" Her youth, her beauty, and her orphan-state
" Gave a kind countess interest in her fate;
" With her she dwelt, and still might dwelling be,
" When the earl's folly caused the lass to flee;
" A second friend was she compell'd to shun,
" By the rude offers of an uncheck'd son;
" I found her then, and with a mother's love
" Regard the gentle girl whom you approve;
" Yet, e'en with me protection is not peace,
" Nor man's designs, nor beauty's trials cease:
" Like sordid boys by costly fruit they feel,
" They will not purchase, but they try to steal."

Now this good Lady, like a witness true,
Told but the truth, and all the truth she knew;
And 'tis our duty and our pain to show
Truth this good lady had not means to know.
Yes, there was lock'd within the damsel's breast
A fact important to be now confess'd;
Gently, my muse, th' afflicting tale relate,
And have some feeling for a sister's fate.

Where Anna dwelt, a conquering hero came,—
An Irish captain, *Sedley* was his name;
And he too had that same prevailing art,
That gave soft wishes to the virgin's heart:
In years they differ'd; he had thirty seen
When this young beauty counted just fifteen;

But still they were a lovely lively pair,
And trod on earth as if they trod on air.

On love, delightful theme! the captain dwelt
With force still growing with the hopes he felt;
But with some caution and reluctance told,
He had a father crafty, harsh, and old;
Who, as possessing much, would much expect,
Or both, for ever, from his love reject:
Why then offence to one so powerful give,
Who (for their comfort) had not long to live?

With this poor prospect the deluded maid,
In words confiding, was indeed betray'd;
And, soon as terrors in her bosom rose,
The hero fled; they hinder'd his repose.
Deprived of him, she to a parent's breast
Her secret trusted, and her pains impress'd;
Let her to town (so prudence urged) repair,
To shun disgrace, at least to hide it there;
But ere she went, the luckless damsel pray'd
A chosen friend might lend her timely aid:
"Yes! my soul's sister, my Eliza, come,
"Hear her last sigh, and ease thy Anna's doom:"
"'Tis a fool's wish," the angry father cried,
But, lost in troubles of his own, complied;
And dear Eliza to her friend was sent,
T' indulge that wish, and be her punishment:
The time arrived, and brought a tenfold dread;
The time was past, and all the terror fled;
The infant died; the face resumed each charm,
And reason now brought trouble and alarm:

" Should her Eliza—no! she was too just,
" Too good and kind—but ah! too young to trust."
Anna return'd, her former place resumed,
And faded beauty with new grace re-bloom'd;
And if some whispers of the past were heard,
They died innoxious, as no cause appear'd;
But other cares on Anna's bosom press'd,
She saw her father gloomy and distress'd;
He died o'erwhelm'd with debt, and soon was shed
The filial sorrow o'er a mother dead:
She sought Eliza's arms — that faithful friend was wed;
Then was compassion by the countess shown,
And all th' adventures of her life are known.

And now, beyond her hopes—no longer tried
By slavish awe—she lived a Yeoman's bride;
Then bless'd her lot, and with a grateful mind
Was careful, cheerful, vigilant, and kind:
The gentle husband felt supreme delight,
Bless'd by her joy, and happy in her sight;
He saw with pride in every friend and guest
High admiration and regard express'd:
With greater pride, and with superior joy,
He look'd exulting on his first-born boy;
To her fond breast the wife her infant strain'd,
Some feelings utter'd, some were not explain'd;
And she enraptured with her treasure grew,
The sight familiar, but the pleasure new.

Yet there appear'd within that tranquil state
Some threat'ning prospect of uncertain fate;

Between the married when a secret lies,
It wakes suspicion from enforced disguise:
Still thought the Wife upon her absent friend,
With all that must upon her truth depend;
" There is no being in the world beside,
" Who can discover what that friend will hide;
" Who knew the fact, knew not my name or state,
" Who these can tell cannot the fact relate;
" But thou, Eliza, canst the whole impart,
" And all my safety is thy generous heart."

Mix'd with these fears—but light and transient
Fled years of peace, prosperity, and ease; [these—
So tranquil all, that scarce a gloomy day
For days of gloom unmix'd prepared the way:
One eve, the Wife, still happy in her state,
Sang gaily, thoughtless of approaching fate;
Then came a letter, that (received in dread
Not unobserved) she in confusion read;
The substance this—" Her friend rejoiced to find
" That she had riches with a grateful mind;
" While poor Eliza had, from place to place,
" Been lured by hope to labour for disgrace;
" That every scheme her wandering husband tried,
" Pain'd while he lived, and perish'd when he died."
She then of want in angry style complain'd,
Her child a burthen to her life remain'd,
Her kindred shunn'd her prayers, no friend her soul
sustain'd.

" Yet why neglected? Dearest Anna knew
" Her worth once tried, her friendship ever true;

" She hoped, she trusted, though by wants oppress'd,
" To lock the treasured secret in her breast;
" Yet, vex'd by trouble, must apply to one,
" For kindness due to her for kindness done."

In Anna's mind was tumult, in her face
Flushings of dread had momentary place:
" I must," she judged, " these cruel lines expose,
" Or fears, or worse than fears, my crime disclose."

The letter shown, he said, with sober smile,—
" Anna, your Friend has not a friendly style:
" Say, where could you with this fair lady dwell,
" Who boasts of secrets that she scorns to tell?"
" At school," she answer'd: he "at school!" replied;
" Nay, then I know the secrets you would hide;
" Some early longings these, without dispute,
" Some youthful gaspings for forbidden fruit:
" Why so disorder'd, love? are such the crimes
" That give us sorrow in our graver times?
" Come, take a present for your friend, and rest
" In perfect peace—you find you are confess'd."

This cloud, though past, alarm'd the conscious wife,
Presaging gloom and sorrow for her life;
Who to her answer join'd a fervent prayer,
That her Eliza would a sister spare:
If she again—but was there cause?—should send,
Let her direct—and then she named a friend:
A sad expedient untried friends to trust,
And still to fear the tried may be unjust:

Such is his pain, who, by his debt oppress'd,
Seeks by new bonds a temporary rest.

Few were her peaceful days till Anna read
The words she dreaded, and had cause to dread :—

" Did she believe, did she, unkind, suppose
" That thus Eliza's friendship was to close?
" No! though she tried, and her desire was plain,
" To break the friendly bond, she strove in vain :
" Ask'd she for silence? why so loud the call,
" And yet the token of her love so small?
" By means like these will you attempt to bind
" And check the movements of an injured mind?
" Poor as I am, I shall be proud to show
" What dangerous secrets I may safely know :
" Secrets to men of jealous minds convey'd
" Have many a noble house in ruins laid :
" Anna, I trust, although with wrongs beset,
" And urged by want, I shall be faithful yet ;
" But what temptation may from these arise,
" To take a slighted woman by surprise,
" Becomes a subject for your serious care—
" For who offends, must for offence prepare."

Perplex'd, dismay'd, the Wife foresaw her doom ;
A day deferr'd was yet a day to come ;
But still, though painful her suspended state.
She dreaded more the crisis of her fate ;
Better to die than Stafford's scorn to meet,
And her strange friend perhaps would be discreet :

Presents she sent, and made a strong appeal
To woman's feelings, begging her to feel;
With too much force she wrote of jealous men,
And her tears falling spoke beyond the pen;
Eliza's silence she again implored,
And promised all that prudence could afford.

For looks composed and careless, Anna tried;
She seem'd in trouble, and unconscious sigh'd:
The faithful Husband, who devoutly loved
His silent partner, with concern reproved:
"What secret sorrows on my Anna press,
"That love may not partake, nor care redress?"
"None, none," she answer'd, with a look so kind,
That the fond man determined to be blind.

A few succeeding weeks of brief repose
In Anna's cheek revived the faded rose;
A hue like this the western sky displays,
That glows awhile, and withers as we gaze.

Again the Friend's tormenting letter came—
"The wants she suffer'd were affection's shame;
"She with her child a life of terrors led,
"Unhappy fruit! but of a lawful bed:
"Her friend was tasting every bliss in life,
"The joyful mother, and the wealthy wife;
"While she was placed in doubt, in fear, in want,
"To starve on trifles that the happy grant;
"Poorly for all her faithful silence paid,
"And tantalized by ineffectual aid:

" She could not thus a beggar's lot endure;
" She wanted something permanent and sure:
" If they were friends, then equal be their lot,
" And she was free to speak if they were not."

Despair and terror seized the Wife, to find
The artful workings of a vulgar mind:
Money she had not, but the hint of dress
Taught her new bribes, new terrors to redress:
She with such feeling then described her woes,
That envy's self might on the view repose;
Then to a mother's pains she made appeal,
And painted grief like one compell'd to feel.

Yes! so she felt, that in her air, her face,
In every purpose, and in every place;
In her slow motion, in her languid mien,
The grief, the sickness of her soul, were seen.

Of some mysterious ill, the Husband sure,
Desired to trace it, for he hoped to cure;
Something he knew obscurely, and had seen
His wife attend a cottage on the green;
Love, loth to wound, endured conjecture long,
Till fear would speak, and spoke in language strong.

" All I must know, my Anna — truly know
" Whence these emotions, terrors, troubles flow;
" Give me thy grief, and I will fairly prove
" Mine is no selfish, no ungenerous love."

Now Anna's soul the seat of strife became,
Fear with respect contended, love with shame;
But fear prevailing was the ruling guide,
Prescribing what to show and what to hide.

"It is my friend," she said — "but why disclose
"A woman's weakness struggling with her woes?
"Yes, she has grieved me by her fond complaints,
"The wrongs she suffers, the distress she paints:
"Something we do — but she afflicts me still,
"And says, with power to help, I want the will;
"This plaintive style I pity and excuse,
"Help when I can, and grieve when I refuse;
"But here my useless sorrows I resign,
"And will be happy in a love like thine."

The Husband doubted; he was kind but cool: —
"'T is a strong friendship to arise at school;
"Once more then, love, once more the sufferer aid, —
"I too can pity, but I must upbraid:
"Of these vain feelings then thy bosom free,
"Nor be o'erwhelm'd by useless sympathy."

The Wife again despatch'd the useless bribe,
Again essay'd her terrors to describe;
Again with kindest words entreated peace,
And begg'd her offerings for a time might cease.

A calm succeeded, but too like the one
That causes terror ere the storm comes on:

A secret sorrow lived in Anna's heart,
In Stafford's mind a secret fear of art;
Not long they lasted — this determined foe
Knew all her claims, and nothing would forego;
Again her letter came, where Anna read,
"My child, one cause of my distress, is dead:
"Heav'n has my infant:"—"Heartless wretch!" she cried,
"Is this thy joy?" — "I am no longer tied:
"Now will I, hast'ning to my friend, partake
"Her cares and comforts, and no more forsake;
"Now shall we both in equal station move,
"Save that my friend enjoys a husband's love."

Complaint and threats so strong, the Wife amazed,
Who wildly on her cottage-neighbour gazed;
Her tones, her trembling, first betray'd her grief
When floods of tears gave anguish its relief.

She fear'd that Stafford would refuse assent,
And knew her selfish Friend would not relent;
She must petition, yet delay'd the task,
Ashamed, afraid, and yet compell'd to ask;
Unknown to him some object fill'd her mind,
And, once suspicious, he became unkind:
They sate one evening, each absorb'd in gloom,
When, hark! a noise and rushing to the room,
The Friend tripp'd lightly in, and laughing said, "I come."

Anna received her with an anxious mind,
And meeting whisper'd, "Is Eliza kind?"

Reserved and cool, the Husband sought to prove
The depth and force of this mysterious love.
To nought that pass'd between the Stranger-friend
And his meek partner seem'd he to attend;
But, anxious, listen'd to the lightest word
That might some knowledge of his guest afford;
And learn the reason one to him so dear
Should feel such fondness, yet betray such fear.

Soon he perceived this uninvited guest,
Unwelcome too, a sovereign power possess'd;
Lofty she was and careless, while the meek
And humbled Anna was afraid to speak:
As mute she listen'd with a painful smile,
Her friend sate laughing and at ease the while,
Telling her idle tales with all the glee
Of careless and unfeeling levity.
With calm good sense he knew his Wife endued,
And now with wounded pride her conduct view'd;
Her speech was low, her every look convey'd —
"I am a slave, subservient and afraid."
All trace of comfort vanish'd, if she spoke,
The noisy friend upon her purpose broke;
To her remarks with insolence replied,
And her assertions doubted or denied;
While the meek Anna like an infant shook,
Wo-struck and trembling at the serpent's look.

"There is," said Stafford, "yes, there is a cause —
"This creature frights her, overpowers and awes."

Six weeks had pass'd — "In truth, my love, this friend
"Has liberal notions; what does she intend?
"Without a hint she came, and will she stay
"Till she receives the hint to go away?"

Confused the Wife replied, in spite of truth,
"I love the dear companion of my youth."
"'Tis well," said Stafford; "then your loves renew;
"Trust me, your rivals, Anna, will be few."

Though playful this, she felt too much distress'd
T' admit the consolation of a jest;
Ill she reposed, and in her dreams would sigh,
And murmuring forth her anguish, beg to die;
With sunken eye, slow pace, and pallid cheek,
She look'd confusion, and she fear'd to speak.

All this the Friend beheld, for, quick of sight,
She knew the husband eager for her flight;
And that by force alone she could retain
The lasting comforts she had hope to gain:
She now perceived, to win her post for life,
She must infuse fresh terrors in the wife;
Must bid to friendship's feebler ties adieu,
And boldly claim the object in her view:
She saw the husband's love, and knew the power
Her friend might use in some propitious hour.

Meantime the anxious Wife, from pure distress
Assuming courage, said, "I will confess;"

But with her children felt a parent's pride,
And sought once more the hated truth to hide.

Offended, grieved, impatient, Stafford bore
The odious change, till he could bear no more;
A friend to truth, in speech and action plain,
He held all fraud and cunning in disdain;
But fraud to find, and falsehood to detect,
For once he fled to measures indirect.

One day the Friends were seated in that room
The Guest with care adorn'd, and named her home:
To please the eye, there curious prints were placed,
And some light volumes to amuse the taste;
Letters and music, on a table laid,
The favourite studies of the fair betray'd;
Beneath the window was the toilet spread,
And the fire gleam'd upon a crimson bed.

In Anna's looks and falling tears were seen
How interesting had their subjects been:
" Oh! then," resumed the Friend, " I plainly find
" That you and Stafford know each other's mind;
" I must depart, must on the world be thrown,
" Like one discarded, worthless and unknown;
" But, shall I carry, and to please a foe,
" A painful secret in my bosom? No!
" Think not your Friend a reptile you may tread
" Beneath your feet, and say, the worm is dead;
" I have some feeling, and will not be made
" The scorn of her whom love cannot persuade:

" Would not your word, your slightest wish, effect
" All that I hope, petition, or expect?
" The power you have, but you the use decline—
" Proof that you feel not, or you fear not mine.
" There was a time, when I, a tender maid,
" Flew at a call, and your desires obey'd;
" A very mother to the child became,
" Consoled your sorrow, and conceal'd your shame;
" But now, grown rich and happy, from the door
" You thrust a bosom-friend, despised and poor;
" That child alive, its mother might have known
" The hard, ungrateful spirit she has shown."

Here paused the Guest, and Anna cried at length—
" You try me, cruel friend! beyond my strength:
" Would I had been beside my infant laid,
" Where none would vex me, threaten, or upbraid!"

In Anna's looks the Friend beheld despair;
Her speech she soften'd, and composed her air;
Yet, while professing love, she answer'd still—
" You can befriend me, but you want the will."
They parted thus, and Anna went her way,
To shed her secret sorrows, and to pray.

Stafford, amused with books, and fond of home,
By reading oft dispell'd the evening gloom;
History or tale—all heard him with delight,
And thus was pass'd this memorable night.

The listening Friend bestow'd a flattering smile;
A sleeping boy the mother held the while;

And ere she fondly bore him to his bed,
On his fair face the tear of anguish shed.

And now his task resumed, "My tale," said he,
"Is short and sad, short may our sadness be!"—

"The Caliph Harun (1), as historians tell,
"Ruled, for a tyrant, admirably well;
"Where his own pleasures were not touch'd, to men
"He was humane, and sometimes even then;
"Harun was fond of fruits, and gardens fair,
"And wo to all whom he found poaching there:
"Among his pages was a lively Boy,
"Eager in search of every trifling joy;
"His feelings vivid, and his fancy strong,
"He sigh'd for pleasure while he shrank from wrong;
"When by the Caliph in the garden placed,
"He saw the treasures which he long'd to taste;
"And oft alone he ventured to behold
"Rich hanging fruits with rind of glowing gold;
"Too long he stay'd forbidden bliss to view,
"His virtue failing, as his longings grew;
"Athirst and wearied with the noontide heat,
"Fate to the garden led his luckless feet;
"With eager eyes and open mouth he stood,
"Smelt the sweet breath, and touch'd the fragrant food;

(1) The sovereign here meant is the Haroun Alraschid, or Harun al Raschid, who died early in the ninth century: he is often the hearer, and sometimes the hero, of a tale in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments.

" The tempting beauty sparkling in the sun
" Charm'd his young sense — he ate, and was undone:
" When the fond glutton paused, his eyes around
" He turn'd, and eyes upon him turning found;
" Pleased he beheld the spy, a brother-page,
" A friend allied in office and in age;
" Who promised much that secret he would be,
" But high the price he fix'd on secrecy.

" ' Were you suspected, my unhappy friend,'
" Began the Boy, ' where would your sorrows end?
" ' In all the palace there is not a page
" ' The Caliph would not torture in his rage:
" ' I think I see thee now impaled alive,
" ' Writhing in pangs — but come, my friend! revive;
" ' Had some beheld you, all your purse contains
" ' Could not have saved you from terrific pains;
" ' I scorn such meanness; and, if not in debt,
" ' Would not an asper on your folly set.'

" The hint was strong; young Osmyn search'd his store
" For bribes, and found he soon could bribe no more;
" That time arrived, for Osmyn's stock was small,
" And the young tyrant now possess'd it all;
" The cruel youth, with his companions near,
" Gave the broad hint that raised the sudden fear;
" Th' ungenerous insult now was daily shown,
" And Osmyn's peace and honest pride were flown;

" Then came augmenting woes, and fancy strong
" Drew forms of suffering, a tormenting throng;
" He felt degraded, and the struggling mind
" Dared not be free, and could not be resign'd;
" And all his pains and fervent prayers obtain'd
" Was truce from insult, while the fears remain'd.

" One day it chanced that this degraded Boy
" And Tyrant-friend were fix'd at their employ;
" Who now had thrown restraint and form aside,
" And for his bribe in plainer speech applied:
" ' Long have I waited, and the last supply
" ' Was but a pittance, yet how patient I!
" ' But give me now what thy first terrors gave,
" ' My speech shall praise thee, and my silence save.'

" Osmyn had found, in many a dreadful day,
" The tyrant fiercer when he seem'd in play:
" He begg'd forbearance; ' I have not to give;
" ' Spare me awhile, although 't is pain to live:
" ' Oh! had that stolen fruit the power possess'd
" ' To war with life, I now had been at rest.'

" ' So fond of death,' replied the Boy, ' 't is plain
" ' Thou hast no certain notion of the pain;
" ' But to the Caliph were a secret shown,
" ' Death has no pain that would be then unknown.'

" Now," says the story, " in a closet near,
" The monarch seated, chanced the boys to hear;

" There oft he came, when wearied on his throne,
" To read, sleep, listen, pray, or be alone.

" The tale proceeds, when first the Caliph found
" That he was robb'd, although alone, he frown'd;
" And swore in wrath, that he would send the boy
" Far from his notice, favour, or employ;
" But gentler movements soothed his ruffled mind,
" And his own failings taught him to be kind.

" Relenting thoughts then painted Osmyn young,
" His passion urgent, and temptation strong;
" And that he suffer'd from that villain-Spy
" Pains worse than death, till he desired to die;
" Then if his morals had received a stain,
" His bitter sorrows made him pure again:
" To reason, pity lent her powerful aid,
" For one so tempted, troubled, and betray'd;
" And a free pardon the glad Boy restored
" To the kind presence of a gentle lord;
" Who from his office and his country drove
" That traitor-Friend, whom pains nor pray'rs could move;
" Who raised the fears no mortal could endure,
" And then with cruel av'rice sold the cure.

" My tale is ended; but, to be applied,
" I must describe the place where Caliphs hide."

Here both the females look'd alarm'd, distress'd,
With hurried passions hard to be express'd.

" It was a closet by a chamber placed,
" Where slept a lady of no vulgar taste;
" Her friend attended in that chosen room
" That she had honour'd and proclaim'd her home;
" To please the eye were chosen pictures placed,
" And some light volumes to amuse the taste;
" Letters and music on a table laid,
" For much the lady wrote, and often played;
" Beneath the window was a toilet spread,
" And a fire gleam'd upon a crimson bed.'

He paused, he rose; with troubled joy the Wife
Felt the new era of her changeful life;
Frankness and love appear'd in Stafford's face,
And all her trouble to delight gave place.

Twice made the Guest an effort to sustain
Her feelings, twice resumed her seat in vain,
Nor could suppress her shame, nor could support
her pain:
Quick she retired, and all the dismal night
Thought of her guilt, her folly, and her flight;
Then sought unseen her miserable home,
To think of comforts lost, and brood on wants
to come.

(1) " The Confidant" is interesting, though not altogether pleasing. A fair one makes a slip at the early age of fifteen, which is concealed from every one but her mother, and a sentimental friend, from whom she could conceal nothing. Her after life is pure and exemplary; and at twenty-five she is married to a worthy man, with whom she lives in perfect innocence and concord for many happy years. At last, the confidant of her childhood, whose lot has been less prosperous, starts up and importunes her for money — not forgetting to hint at the fatal secret of which she is the depository. After agonizing and plundering her for years, she at last comes and settles

herself in her house, and embitters her whole existence by her selfish threats and ungenerous extortions. The husband, who had been greatly disturbed at the change in his wife's temper and spirits, at last accidentally overhears enough to put him in possession of the fact; and resolving to forgive a fault so long past, and so well repaired, takes occasion to intimate his knowledge of it, and his disdain of the false confidant, in an ingenious apologue,—which, however, is plain enough to drive the pestilent visitor from his house, and to restore peace and confidence to the bosom of his grateful wife.—JEFFREY.]

TALE XVII.

RESENTMENT.

——— She hath a tear for pity, and a hand
Open as day for melting charity;
Yet, notwithstanding, being incensed, is flint ———
Her temper, therefore, must be well observed. — 2 *Henry IV.*

——— Three or four wenches where I stood cried — "Alas! good soul!" and forgave him with all their hearts; but there is no heed to be taken of them: if Cæsar had stabb'd their mothers, they would have done no less. — *Julius Cæsar.*

——— How dost? Art cold?
I 'm cold myself — Where is the straw, my fellow?
The art of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious. — *Lear.*

TALE XVII.

RESENTMENT. (1)

FEMALES there are of unsuspicious mind,
Easy and soft, and credulous and kind;
Who, when offended for the twentieth time,
Will hear th' offender and forgive the crime:
And there are others whom, like these to cheat,
Asks but the humblest effort of deceit;
But they, once injured, feel a strong disdain,
And, seldom pardoning, never trust again;
Urged by religion, they forgive — but yet
Guard the warm heart, and never more forget:
Those are like wax — apply them to the fire,
Melting, they take th' impressions you desire;
Easy to mould, and fashion as you please,
And again moulded with an equal ease:
Like smelted iron *these* the forms retain,
But once impress'd will never melt again.

A busy port a serious Merchant made
His chosen place to recommence his trade;
And brought his Lady, who, their children dead,
Their native seat of recent sorrow fled:

(1) [It is understood that this tale was suggested by some realities in the history of Mrs. Elmy, the mother of the Poet's wife.]

The husband duly on the quay was seen,
The wife at home became at length serene;
There in short time the social couple grew
With all acquainted, friendly with a few;
When the good lady, by disease assail'd,
In vain resisted—hope and science fail'd:
Then spake the female friends, by pity led,
"Poor merchant *Paul!* what think ye? will he wed?
"A quiet, easy, kind, religious man,
"Thus can he rest?—I wonder if he can."

He too, as grief subsided in his mind,
Gave place to notions of congenial kind;
Grave was the man, as we have told before;
His years were forty—he might pass for more;
Composed his features were, his stature low,
His air important, and his motion slow;
His dress became him, it was neat and plain,
The colour purple, and without a stain;
His words were few, and special was his care
In simplest terms his purpose to declare;
A man more civil, sober, and discreet,
More grave and courteous, you could seldom meet:
Though frugal he, yet sumptuous was his board,
As if to prove how much he could afford;
For though reserved himself, he loved to see
His table plenteous, and his neighbours free:
Among these friends he sat in solemn style,
And rarely soften'd to a sober smile;
For this, observant friends their reasons gave—
"Concerns so vast would make the idlest grave;

" And for such man to be of language free,
" Would seem incongruous as a singing tree:
" Trees have their music, but the birds they shield
" The pleasing tribute for protection yield;
" Each ample tree the tuneful choir defends,
" As this rich Merchant cheers his happy friends!"

In the same town it was his chance to meet
A gentle Lady, with a mind discreet;
Neither in life's decline, nor bloom of youth,
One famed for maiden modesty and truth:
By nature cool, in pious habits bred,
She look'd on lovers with a virgin's dread:
Deceivers, rakes, and libertines were they,
And harmless beauty their pursuit and prey;
As bad as giants in the ancient times
Were modern lovers, and the same their crimes:
Soon as she heard of her all-conquering charms,
At once she fled to her defensive arms;
Conn'd o'er the tales her maiden aunt had told,
And, statue-like, was motionless and cold;
From prayer of love, like that Pygmalion pray'd,
Ere the hard stone became the yielding maid—(1)
A different change in this chaste nymph ensued,
And turn'd to stone the breathing flesh and blood:
Whatever youth described his wounded heart,
" He came to rob her, and she scorn'd his art;

(1) " Almighty gods, if all we mortals want,
If all we can require, be yours to grant;
Make this fair statue mine, he would have said,
But changed his words for shame, and only pray'd—
Give me the likeness of my ivory maid."—DRYDEN.

" And who of raptures once presumed to speak,
" Told listening maids he thought them fond and weak;
" But should a worthy man his hopes display
" In few plain words, and beg a *yes* or *nay*,
" He would deserve an answer just and plain,
" Since adulation only moved disdain—
" Sir, if my friends object not, come again."

Hence, our grave Lover, though he liked the face,
Praised not a feature—dwelt not on a grace;
But in the simplest terms declared his state,
" A widow'd man, who wish'd a virtuous mate;
" Who fear'd neglect, and was compell'd to trust
" Dependents wasteful, idle, or unjust;
" Or should they not the trusted stores destroy,
" At best, they could not help him to enjoy;
" But with her person and her prudence blest,
" His acts would prosper, and his soul have rest:
" Would she be his?"—" Why, that was much to say;
" She would consider: he awhile might stay;
" She liked his manners, and believed his word;
" He did not flatter, flattery she abhorr'd:
" It was her happy lot in peace to dwell—
" Would change make better what was now so well?
" But she would ponder."—" This," he said, " was kind,"
And begg'd to know " when she had fix'd her mind."

Romantic maidens would have scorn'd the air,
And the cool prudence of a mind so fair;

But well it pleased this wiser maid to find
Her own mild virtues in her lover's mind.

His worldly wealth she sought, and quickly grew
Pleased with her search, and happy in the view
Of vessels freighted with abundant stores,
Of rooms whose treasures press'd the groaning floors;
And he of clerks and servants could display
A little army on a public day:
Was this a man like needy bard to speak
Of balmy lip, bright eye, or rosy cheek?

The sum appointed for her widow'd state,
Fix'd by her friend, excited no debate;
Then the kind lady gave her hand and heart,
And, never finding, never dealt with art:
In his engagements she had no concern;
He taught her not, nor had she wish to learn:
On him in all occasions she relied,
His word her surety, and his worth her pride.

When ship was launch'd, and merchant Paul had share,
A bounteous feast became the lady's care;
Who then her entry to the dinner made,
In costly raiment, and with kind parade.

Call'd by this duty on a certain day,
And robed to grace it in a rich array,
Forth from her room, with measured step she came,
Proud of th' event, and stately look'd the dame:

The husband met her at his study-door—
" This way, my love—one moment, and no more:
" A trifling business—you will understand,
" The law requires that you affix your hand;
" But first attend, and you shall learn the cause,
" Why forms like these have been prescribed by laws:"
Then from his chair a man in black arose,
And with much quickness hurried off his prose:
That " Ellen Paul, the wife, and so forth, freed
" From all control, her own the act and deed,
" And forasmuch"——said she, " I've no distrust,
" For he that asks it is discreet and just;
" Our friends are waiting—where am I to sign?—
" There!——Now be ready when we meet to dine."

This said, she hurried off in great delight,
The ship was launch'd, and joyful was the night.

Now, says the reader, and in much disdain,
This serious Merchant was a rogue in grain;
A treacherous wretch, an artful, sober knave,
And ten times worse for manners cool and grave;
And she devoid of sense, to set her hand
To scoundrel deeds, she could not understand.

Alas! 'tis true; and I in vain had tried
To soften crime, that cannot be denied;
And might have labour'd many a tedious verse
The latent cause of mischief to rehearse:
Be it confess'd, that long, with troubled look,
This Trader view'd a huge accompting-book

(His former marriage for a time delay'd
The dreaded hour, the present lent its aid):
But he too clearly saw the evil day,
And put the terror, by deceit, away;
Thus by connecting with his sorrows, crime,
He gain'd a portion of uneasy time.—
All this too late the injured Lady saw,
What law had given, again she gave to law;
His guilt, her folly—these at once impress'd
Their lasting feelings on her guileless breast.

"Shame I can bear," she cried, "and want sustain,
"But will not see this guilty wretch again:"
For all was lost, and he, with many a tear,
Confess'd the fault—she turning scorn'd to hear.
To legal claims he yielded all his worth,
But small the portion, and the wrong'd were wroth,
Nor to their debtor would a part allow;
And where to live he knew not—knew not how.

The Wife a cottage found, and thither went
The suppliant man, but she would not relent:
Thenceforth she utter'd with indignant tone,
"I feel the misery, and will feel alone:"—
He would turn servant for her sake, would keep
The poorest school; the very streets would sweep,
To show his love—"It was already shown:
"And her affliction should be all her own:
"His wants and weakness might have touch'd her heart,
"But from his meanness she resolved to part."

In a small alley was she lodged, beside
Its humblest poor, and at the view she cried:
"Welcome—yes! let me welcome, if I can,
"The fortune dealt me by this cruel man;
"Welcome this low thatch'd roof, this shatter'd door,
"These walls of clay, this miserable floor;
"Welcome my envied neighbours; this, to you,
"Is all familiar—all to me is new:
"You have no hatred to the loathsome meal;
"Your firmer nerves no trembling terrors feel,
"Nor, what you must expose, desire you to conceal;
"What your coarse feelings bear without offence,
"Disgusts my taste, and poisons every sense;
"Daily shall I your sad relations hear,
"Of wanton women, and of men severe;
"There will dire curses, dreadful oaths abound,
"And vile expressions shock me and confound;
"Noise of dull wheels, and songs with horrid words,
"Will be the music that this lane affords;
"Mirth that disgusts, and quarrels that degrade
"The human mind, must my retreat invade:
"Hard is my fate! yet easier to sustain,
"Than to abide with guilt and fraud again;
"A grave impostor! who expects to meet,
"In such grey locks and gravity, deceit?
"Where the sea rages, and the billows roar,
"Men know the danger, and they quit the shore;
"But, be there nothing in the way descried,
"When o'er the rocks smooth runs the wicked tide—
"Sinking unwarn'd, they execrate the shock,
'And the dread peril of the sunken rock."

A frowning world had now the man to dread,
Taught in no arts, to no profession bred:
Pining in grief, beset with constant care,
Wandering he went, to rest he knew not where.

Meantime the Wife—but she abjured the name—
Endured her lot, and struggled with the shame;
When lo! an uncle on the mother's side,
In nature something, as in blood allied,
Admired her firmness, his protection gave,
And show'd a kindness she disdain'd to crave.

Frugal and rich the man, and frugal grew
The sister-mind, without a selfish view;
And further still—the temp'rate pair agreed
With what they saved the patient poor to feed:
His whole estate, when to the grave consign'd,
Left the good kinsman to the kindred mind;
Assured that law, with spell secure and tight,
Had fix'd it as her own peculiar right.

Now to her ancient residence removed,
She lived as widow, well endowed and loved;
Decent her table was, and to her door
Came daily welcomed the neglected poor:
The absent sick were soothed by her relief,
As her free bounty sought the haunts of grief;
A plain and homely charity had she,
And loved the objects of her alms to see;
With her own hands she dress'd the savoury meat,
With her own fingers wrote the choice receipt;

She heard all tales that injured wives relate,
And took a double interest in their fate;
But of all husbands not a wretch was known
So vile, so mean, so cruel, as her own.

This bounteous Lady kept an active spy,
To search th' abodes of want, and to supply;
The gentle *Susan* served the liberal dame—
Unlike their notions, yet their deeds the same:
No practised villain could a victim find,
Than this stern Lady more completely blind;
Nor (if detected in his fraud) could meet
One less disposed to pardon a deceit;
The wrong she treasured, and on no pretence
Received th' offender, or forgot th' offence:
But the kind Servant, to the thrice-proved knave
A fourth time listen'd, and the past forgave.

First in her youth, when she was blithe and gay,
Came a smooth rogue, and stole her love away;
Then to another and another flew,
To boast the wanton mischief he could do:
Yet she forgave him, though so great her pain,
That she was never blithe or gay again.

Then came a spoiler, who, with villain-art,
Implored her hand, and agonized her heart;
He seized her purse, in idle waste to spend
With a vile wanton, whom she call'd her friend;
Five years she suffer'd—he had revell'd five—
Then came to show her he was just alive;

Alone he came, his vile companion dead;
And he, a wand'ring pauper, wanting bread;
His body wasted, wither'd life and limb,
When this kind soul became a slave to him:
Nay, she was sure that, should he now survive,
No better husband would be left alive;
For him she mourn'd, and then, alone and poor,
Sought and found comfort at her Lady's door:
Ten years she served, and, mercy her employ,
Her tasks were pleasure, and her duty joy.

Thus lived the Mistress and the Maid, design'd
Each other's aid—one cautious, and both kind:
Oft at their window, working, they would sigh
To see the aged and the sick go by;
Like wounded bees, that at their home arrive,
Slowly and weak, but labouring for the hive.

The busy people of a mason's yard
The curious Lady view'd with much regard;
With steady motion she perceived them draw
Through blocks of stone the slowly-working saw;
It gave her pleasure and surprise to see
Among these men the signs of revelry:
Cold was the season, and confined their view,
Tedious their tasks, but merry were the crew:
There she beheld an aged pauper wait,
Patient and still, to take an humble freight;
Within the panniers on an ass he laid
The ponderous grit, and for the portion paid;
This he re-sold, and, with each trifling gift,
Made shift to live, and wretched was the shift.

Now will it be by every reader told
Who was this humble trader, poor and old.—
In vain an author would a name suppress,
From the least hint a reader learns to guess;
Of children lost, our novels sometimes treat,
We never care—assured again to meet:
In vain the writer for concealment tries,
We trace his purpose under all disguise;
Nay, though he tells us they are dead and gone,
Of whom we wot—they will appear anon;
Our favourites fight, are wounded, hopeless lie,
Survive they cannot—nay, they cannot die;
Now, as these tricks and stratagems are known,
'Tis best, at once, the simple truth to own.

This was the Husband—in an humble shed
He nightly slept, and daily sought his bread:
Once for relief the weary man applied;
"Your wife is rich," the angry vestry cried:
Alas! he dared not to his wife complain,
Feeling her wrongs, and fearing her disdain:
By various methods he had tried to live,
But not one effort would subsistence give:
He was an usher in a school, till noise
Made him less able than the weaker boys;
On messages he went, till he in vain
Strove names, or words, or meanings to retain;
Each small employment in each neighbouring town,
By turn he took, to lay as quickly down:
For, such his fate, he fail'd in all he plann'd,
And nothing prosper'd in his luckless hand.

At his old home, his motive half suppress'd,
He sought no more for riches, but for rest:
There lived the bounteous Wife, and at her gate
He saw in cheerful groups the needy wait;
"Had he a right with bolder hope t' apply?"
He ask'd—was answer'd, and went groaning by:
For some remains of spirit, temper, pride,
Forbade a prayer he knew would be denied.

Thus was the grieving man, with burthen'd ass,
Seen day by day along the street to pass:
"Who is he, Susan? who the poor old man?
"He never calls—do make him, if you can."—
The conscious damsel still delay'd to speak,
She stopp'd confused, and had her words to seek;
From Susan's fears the fact her mistress knew,
And cried—"The wretch! what scheme has he in view?
"Is this his lot?—but let him, let him feel—
"Who wants the courage, not the will, to steal."

A dreadful winter came, each day severe,
Misty when mild, and icy cold when clear;
And still the humble dealer took his load,
Returning slow, and shivering on the road:
The Lady, still relentless, saw him come,
And said—"I wonder, has the wretch a home?"—
"A hut! a hovel!"—"Then his fate appears
"To suit his crime:"—"Yes, lady, not his years;—
"No! nor his sufferings—nor that form decay'd."—
"Well! let the parish give its paupers aid:

" You must the vileness of his acts allow :"—
" And you, dear lady, that he feels it now."—
" When such dissemblers on their deeds reflect,
" Can they the pity they refused expect ?
" He that doth evil, evil shall he dread."—
" The snow," quoth Susan, " falls upon his bed—
" It blows beside the thatch — it melts upon his head."—
" 'Tis weakness, child, for grieving guilt to feel :"—
" Yes, but he never sees a wholesome meal ;
" Through his bare dress appears his shrivell'd skin,
" And ill he fares without, and worse within :
" With that weak body, lame, diseased, and slow,
" What cold, pain, peril, must the sufferer know !"—
" Think on his crime."—" Yes, sure 't was very wrong ;
" But look, (God bless him !) how he gropes along."—
" Brought me to shame."—" Oh ! yes, I know it all—
" What cutting blast ! and he can scarcely crawl ;
" He freezes as he moves — he dies ! if he should fall :
" With cruel fierceness drives this icy sleet—
" And must a Christian perish in the street,
" In sight of Christians ? — There ! at last, he lies ;—
" Nor unsupported can he ever rise :
" He cannot live."—" But is he fit to die ?"—
Here Susan softly mutter'd a reply,
Look'd round the room—said something of its state,
Dives the rich, and Lazarus at his gate ;
And then aloud — " In pity do behold
" The man affrighten'd, weeping, trembling, cold :

" Oh! how those flakes of snow their entrance win
" Through the poor rags, and keep the frost within;
" His very heart seems frozen as he goes,
" Leading that starved companion of his woes:
" He tried to pray—his lips, I saw them move,
" And he so turn'd his piteous looks above;
" But the fierce wind the willing heart opposed,
" And, ere he spoke, the lips in misery closed:
" Poor suffering object! yes, for ease you pray'd,
" And God will hear—he only, I'm afraid."

" Peace! Susan, peace! pain ever follows sin."—
" Ah! then," thought Susan, " when will ours begin?
" When reach'd his home, to what a cheerless fire
" And chilling bed will those cold limbs retire!
" Yet ragged, wretched as it is, that bed
" Takes half the space of his contracted shed;
" I saw the thorns beside the narrow grate,
" With straw collected in a putrid state:
" There will he, kneeling, strive the fire to raise,
" And that will warm him, rather than the blaze:
" The sullen, smoky blaze, that cannot last
" One moment after his attempt is past:
" And I so warmly and so purely laid,
" To sink to rest—indeed, I am afraid."—
" Know you his conduct?"—" Yes, indeed, I know—
" And how he wanders in the wind and snow:
" Safe in our rooms the threat'ning storm we hear,
" But he feels strongly what we faintly fear."

" Wilful was rich, and he the storm defied;
" Wilful is poor, and must the storm abide;"
Said the stern Lady—" 'T is in vain to feel;
" Go and prepare the chicken for our meal."

Susan her task reluctantly began,
And utter'd as she went—" The poor old man!"—
But while her soft and ever-yielding heart
Made strong protest against her lady's part,
The lady's self began to think it wrong
To feel so wrathful, and resent so long.

" No more the wretch would she receive again,
" No more behold him—but she would sustain;
" Great his offence, and evil was his mind—
" But he had suffer'd, and she would be kind:
" She spurn'd such baseness, and she found within
" A fair acquittal from so foul a sin;
" Yet she too err'd, and must of Heaven expect
" To be rejected, him should she reject."

Susan was summon'd—" I 'm about to do
" A foolish act, in part seduced by you;
" Go to the creature—say that I intend,
" Foe to his sins, to be his sorrow's friend;
" Take, for his present comforts, food and wine,
" And mark his feelings at this act of mine:
" Observe if shame be o'er his features spread,
" By his own victim to be soothed and fed;
" But, this inform him, that it is not love
" That prompts my heart, that duties only move:

" Say, that no merits in his favour plead,
" But miseries only, and his abject need;
" Nor bring me grov'ling thanks, nor high-flown praise;
" I would his spirits, not his fancy raise:
" Give him no hope that I shall ever more
" A man so vile to my esteem restore;
" But warn him rather, that, in time of rest,
" His crimes be all remember'd and confess'd:
" I know not all that form the sinner's debt,
" But there is one that he must not forget."

The mind of Susan prompted her with speed
To act her part in every courteous deed:
All that was kind she was prepared to say,
And keep the lecture for a future day;
When he had all life's comforts by his side,
Pity might sleep, and good advice be tried.

This done, the mistress felt disposed to look,
As self-approving, on a pious book:
Yet, to her native bias still inclined,
She felt her act too merciful and kind;
But when, long musing on the chilling scene
So lately past—the frost and sleet so keen—
The man's whole misery in a single view—
Yes! she could think some pity was his due.

Thus fix'd, she heard not her attendant glide
With soft slow step—till, standing by her side,
The trembling servant gasp'd for breath, and shed
Relieving tears, then utter'd—" He is dead!"

"Dead!" said the startled Lady. "Yes, he fell
"Close at the door where he was wont to dwell;
"There his sole friend, the Ass, was standing by,
"Half dead himself, to see his Master die."

"Expired he then, good Heaven! for want of food?"
"No! crusts and water in a corner stood;—
"To have this plenty, and to wait so long,
"And to be right too late, is doubly wrong:
"Then, every day to see him totter by,
"And to forbear—Oh! what a heart had I!"

"Blame me not, child; I tremble at the news."
"'T is my own heart," said Susan, "I accuse:
"To have this money in my purse—to know
"What grief was his, and what to grief we owe;
"To see him often, always to conceive
"How he must pine and languish, groan and grieve;
"And every day in ease and peace to dine,
"And rest in comfort!—what a heart is mine!"(1)

(1) ['Resentment' is one of the pieces in which Mr. Crabbe has exercised his extraordinary powers of giving pain,—though not gratuitously in this instance,—nor without inculcating a strong lesson of forgiveness and compassion. A middle-aged merchant marries a lady of good fortune, and persuades her to make it all over to him when he is on the eve of bankruptcy. He is reduced to utter beggary; and his wife, bitterly and deeply resenting the wrong he had done her, renounces all connection with him, and endures her own reverses with magnanimity. At last a distant relation leaves her his fortune; and she returns to the enjoyment of moderate wealth, and the exercise of charity to all but her miserable husband. Broken by age and disease, he now begs the waste sand from the stone-cutters, and sells it on an ass through the streets:—

——'And from each trifling gift
Made shift to live—and wretched was the shift.'

The unrelenting wife descries him creeping through the wet at this miserable employment; but still withholds all relief, in spite of the touching entreaties of her compassionate handmaid, whose nature is as kind and yielding, as that of her mistress is hard and inflexible. Of all the pictures of mendicant poverty that have ever been brought forward in prose or verse, — in charity sermons or popular harangues, — we know of none half so moving or complete, so powerful, and so true, as is contained in sundry passages of this tale. — JEFFREY.]

TALE XVIII.

THE WAGER.

'Tis thought your deer doth hold you at a bay.

——— I choose her for myself;
If she and I are pleased, what 's that to you?

——— Let 's send each one to his wife,
And he whose wife is most obedient
Shall win the wager.

——— Now by the world it is a lusty wench,
I love her ten times more than e'er I did.

Taming of the Shrew.

TALE XVIII.

THE WAGER.

Counter and *Clubb* were men in trade, whose pains,
Credit, and prudence, brought them constant gains;
Partners and punctual, every friend agreed
Counter and Clubb were men who must succeed.
When they had fix'd some little time in life,
Each thought of taking to himself a wife:
As men in trade alike, as men in love,
They seem'd with no according views to move;
As certain ores in outward view the same,
They show'd their difference when the magnet came.
Counter was vain: with spirit strong and high,
'T was not in him like suppliant swain to sigh:
" His wife might o'er his men and maids preside,
" And in her province be a judge and guide;
" But what he thought, or did, or wish'd to do,
" She must not know, or censure if she knew;
" At home, abroad, by day, by night, if he
" On aught determined, so it was to be:
" How is a man," he ask'd, " for business fit,
" Who to a female can his will submit?

" Absent awhile, let no inquiring eye
" Or plainer speech presume to question why:
" But all be silent; and, when seen again,
" Let all be cheerful — shall a wife complain?
" Friends I invite, and who shall dare t' object,
" Or look on them with coolness or neglect?
" No! I must ever of my house be head,
" And, thus obey'd, I condescend to wed."

Clubb heard the speech — " My friend is nice,"
said he;
" A wife with less respect will do for me:
" How is he certain such a prize to gain?
" What he approves, a lass may learn to feign,
" And so affect t' obey till she begins to reign;
" Awhile complying, she may vary then,
" And be as wives of more unwary men;
" Beside, to him who plays such lordly part,
" How shall a tender creature yield her heart?
" Should he the promised confidence refuse,
" She may another more confiding choose;
" May show her anger, yet her purpose hide,
" And wake his jealousy, and wound his pride.
" In one so humbled, who can trace the friend?
" I on an equal, not a slave, depend;
" If true, my confidence is wisely placed,
" And being false, she only is disgraced."

Clubb, with these notions, cast his eye around,
And one so easy soon a partner found.
The lady chosen was of good repute;
Meekness she had not, and was seldom mute;

Though quick to anger, still she loved to smile;
And would be calm if men would wait awhile:
She knew her duty, and she loved her way,
More pleased in truth to govern than obey;
She heard her priest with reverence, and her spouse
As one who felt the pressure of her vows;
Useful and civil, all her friends confess'd —
Give her her way, and she would choose the best;
Though some indeed a sly remark would make —
Give it her not, and she would choose to take.

All this, when Clubb some cheerful months had spent,
He saw, confess'd, and said he was content.

Counter meantime selected, doubted, weigh'd,
And then brought home a young complying maid;
A tender creature, full of fears as charms,
A beauteous nursling from its mother's arms;
A soft, sweet blossom, such as men must love,
But to preserve must keep it in the stove:
She had a mild, subdued, expiring look —
Raise but the voice, and this fair creature shook;
Leave her alone, she felt a thousand fears —
Chide, and she melted into floods of tears;
Fondly she pleaded and would gently sigh,
For very pity, or she knew not why;
One whom to govern none could be afraid —
Hold up the finger, this meek thing obey'd;
Her happy husband had the easiest task —
Say but his will, no question would she ask;

She sought no reasons, no affairs she knew,
Of business spoke not, and had nought to do.

Oft he exclaim'd, " How meek! how mild! how kind!
" With her 'twere cruel but to seem unkind;
" Though ever silent when I take my leave,
" It pains my heart to think how hers will grieve;
" 'Tis heaven on earth with such a wife to dwell,
" I am in raptures to have sped so well;
" But let me not, my friend, your envy raise,
" No! on my life, your patience has my praise."

His Friend, though silent, felt the scorn implied —
" What need of patience? " to himself he cried:
" Better a woman o'er her house to rule,
" Than a poor child just hurried from her school;
" Who has no care, yet never lives at ease;
" Unfit to rule, and indisposed to please;
" What if he govern, there his boast should end,
" No husband's power can make a slave his friend."

It was the custom of these Friends to meet
With a few neighbours in a neighbouring street;
Where Counter ofttimes would occasion seize,
To move his silent friend by words like these:
" A man," said he, " if govern'd by his wife,
" Gives up his rank and dignity in life;
" Now, better fate befalls my Friend and me" —
He spoke, and look'd th' approving smile to see.

The quiet partner, when he chose to speak,
Desired his friend, " another theme to seek ;
" When thus they met, he judged that state-affairs
" And such important subjects should be theirs : "
But still the partner, in his lighter vein,
Would cause in Clubb affliction or disdain ;
It made him anxious to detect the cause
Of all that boasting — " Wants my friend applause ?
" This plainly proves him not at perfect ease,
" For, felt he pleasure, he would wish to please. —
" These triumphs here for some regrets atone —
" Men who are blest let other men alone."
Thus made suspicious, he observed and saw
His friend each night at early hour withdraw ;
He sometimes mention'd Juliet's tender nerves,
And what attention such a wife deserves :
" In this," thought Clubb, " full sure some mystery lies —
" He laughs at me, yet he with much complies,
" And all his vaunts of bliss are proud apologies."

With such ideas treasured in his breast,
He grew composed, and let his anger rest ;
Till Counter once (when wine so long went round,
That friendship and discretion both were drown'd)
Began, in teasing and triumphant mood,
His evening banter — " Of all earthly good,
" The best," he said, " was an obedient spouse,
" Such as my friend's — that every one allows :
" What if she wishes his designs to know ?
" It is because she would her praise bestow ;

"What if she wills that he remain at home?
"She knows that mischief may from travel come.
"I, who am free to venture where I please,
"Have no such kind preventing checks as these;
"But mine is double duty, first to guide
"Myself aright, then rule a house beside;
"While this our friend, more happy than the free,
"Resigns all power, and laughs at liberty."

"By Heaven," said Clubb, "excuse me if I swear,
"I'll bet a hundred guineas, if he dare,
"That uncontroll'd I will such freedoms take,
"That he will fear to equal — there's my stake."

"A match!" said Counter, much by wine inflamed;
"But we are friends — let smaller stake be named:
"Wine for our future meeting, that will I
"Take and no more — what peril shall we try?"
"Let's to Newmarket," Clubb replied; "or choose
"Yourself the place, and what you like to lose;
"And he who first returns, or fears to go,
"Forfeits his cash —" Said Counter, "Be it so."

The friends around them saw with much delight
The social war, and hail'd the pleasant night;
Nor would they further hear the cause discuss'd,
Afraid the recreant heart of Clubb to trust.

Now sober thoughts return'd as each withdrew,
And of the subject took a serious view;

" 'Twas wrong," thought Counter, " and will grieve
my love;"
" 'T was wrong,' thought Clubb, " my wife will not
approve;
" But friends were present; I must try the thing,
" Or with my folly half the town will ring."

He sought his lady — " Madam, I 'm to blame,
" But was reproach'd, and could not bear the shame;
" Here in my folly — for 'tis best to say
" The very truth — I 've sworn to have my way;
" To that Newmarket — (though I hate the place,
" And have no taste or talents for a race,
" Yet so it is — well, now prepare to chide —)
" I laid a wager that I dared to ride;
" And I must go: by Heaven, if you resist
" I shall be scorn'd, and ridiculed, and hiss'd;
" Let me with grace before my friends appear,
" You know the truth, and must not be severe:
" He too must go, but that he will of course;
" Do you consent? — I never think of force."

" You never need," the worthy Dame replied;
" The husband's honour is the woman's pride;
" If I in trifles be the wilful wife,
" Still for your credit I would lose my life;
" Go! and when fix'd the day of your return,
" Stay longer yet, and let the blockheads learn,
" That though a wife may sometimes wish to rule,
" She would not make th' indulgent man a fool;
" I would at times advise — but idle they
" Who think th' assenting husband *must* obey."

The happy man, who thought his lady right
In other cases, was assured to-night;
Then for the day with proud delight prepared,
To show his doubting friends how much he dared.

Counter—who grieving sought his bed, his rest
Broken by pictures of his love distress'd—
With soft and winning speech the fair prepared;
" She all his councils, comforts, pleasures shared:
" She was assured he loved her from his soul,
" She never knew and need not fear control;
" But so it happen'd — he was grieved at heart,
" It happen'd so, that they awhile must part —
" A little time — the distance was but short,
" And business call'd him — he despised the sport;
" But to Newmarket he engaged to ride,
" With his friend Clubb," and there he stopp'd and sigh'd.

Awhile the tender creature look'd dismay'd,
Then floods of tears the call of grief obey'd: —

" She an objection! No!" she sobb'd, "not one;
" Her work was finish'd, and her race was run;
" For die she must, indeed she would not live
" A week alone, for all the world could give;
" He too must die in that same wicked place;
" It always happen'd — was a common case;
" Among those horrid horses, jockeys, crowds,
" 'Twas certain death — they might bespeak their shrouds;

" He would attempt a race, be sure to fall —
" And she expire with terror — that was all;
" With love like hers she was indeed unfit
" To bear such horrors, but she must submit."

" But for three days, my love! three days at most —"
" Enough for me; I then shall be a ghost —"
" My honour's pledged!" — " Oh! yes, my dearest life,
" I know your honour must outweigh your wife;
" But ere this absence, have you sought a friend?
" I shall be dead — on whom can you depend? —
" Let me one favour of your kindness crave,
" Grant me the stone I mention'd for my grave.—"

" Nay, love, attend — why, bless my soul — I say
" I will return — there — weep no longer — nay! —"
" Well! I obey, and to the last am true,
" But spirits fail me; I must die; adieu!"

" What, Madam! must? — 'tis wrong — I'm angry — zounds!
" Can I remain and lose a thousand pounds?"

" Go then, my love! it is a monstrous sum,
" Worth twenty wives — go, love! and I am dumb —
" Nor be displeased — had I the power to live,
" You might be angry, now you must forgive;
" Alas! I faint — ah! cruel — there 's no need
" Of wounds or fevers — this has done the deed."

The lady fainted, and the husband sent
For every aid, for every comfort went;
Strong terror seized him: "Oh! she loved so well,
"And who th' effect of tenderness could tell?"

She now recover'd, and again began
With accent querulous—"Ah! cruel man—"
Till the sad husband, conscience-struck, confess'd,
'T was very wicked with his Friend to jest;
For now he saw that those who were obey'd,
Could like the most subservient feel afraid;
And though a wife might not dispute the will
Of her liege lord, she could prevent it still.

The morning came, and Clubb prepared to ride
With a smart boy, his servant and his guide;
When, ere he mounted on the ready steed,
Arrived a letter, and he stopp'd to read.

"My friend," he read—"our journey I decline,
"A heart too tender for such strife is mine;
"Yours is the triumph, be you so inclined;
"But you are too considerate and kind:
"In tender pity to my Juliet's fears
"I thus relent, o'ercome by love and tears;
"She knows your kindness; I have heard her say,
"A man like you 't is pleasure to obey:
"Each faithful wife, like ours, must disapprove
"Such dangerous trifling with connubial love;
"What has the idle world, my friend, to do
"With our affairs? they envy me and you:

" What if I could my gentle spouse command —
" Is that a cause I should her tears withstand?
" And what if you, a friend of peace, submit
" To one you love — is that a theme for wit?
" 'Twas wrong, and I shall henceforth judge it weak
" Both of submission and control to speak:
" Be it agreed that all contention cease,
" And no such follies vex our future peace;
" Let each keep guard against domestic strife,
" And find nor slave nor tyrant in his wife."

" Agreed," said Clubb, " with all my soul agreed" —
And to the boy, delighted, gave his steed;
" I think my friend has well his mind express'd,
" And I assent; such things are not a jest."

" True," said the Wife, " no longer he can hide
" The truth that pains him by his wounded pride:
" Your Friend has found it not an easy thing,
" Beneath his yoke, this yielding soul to bring;
" These weeping willows, though they seem inclined
" By every breeze, yet not the strongest wind
" Can from their bent divert this weak but stubborn kind;
" Drooping they seek your pity to excite,
" But 't is at once their nature and delight;
" Such women feel not; while they sigh and weep,
" 'T is but their habit — their affections sleep;
" They are like ice that in the hand we hold,
" So very melting, yet so very cold;
" On such affection let not man rely,
" The husbands suffer, and the ladies sigh:

" But your friend's offer let us kindly take,
" And spare his pride for his vexation's sake;
" For he has found, and through his life will find,
" 'T is easiest dealing with the firmest mind—
" More just when it resists, and, when it yields,
more kind."

TALE XIX.

THE CONVERT.

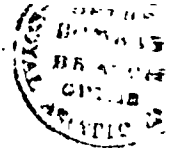
——— A tapster is a good trade, and an old cloak makes a new jerkin; a wither'd serving-man, a fresh tapster. — *Merry Wives of Windsor.*

A fellow, sir, that I have known go about with my troll-my-dames. — *Winter's Tale.*

——— I myself, sometimes leaving the fear of Heaven on the left hand, and hiding mine honour in my necessity, am forced to shuffle, to hedge, and to lurch. — *Merry Wives of Windsor.*

——— Yea, and at that very moment,
Consideration like an angel came,
And whipp'd th' offending Adam out of him. — *Henry V.*

I have lived long enough! my May of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have. — *Macbeth.*



TALE XIX.

THE CONVERT. (1)

Some to our Hero have a hero's name
Denied, because no father's he could claim;
Nor could his mother with precision state
A full fair claim to her certificate;
On her own word the marriage must depend—
A point she was not eager to defend:
But who, without a father's name, can raise
His own so high, deserves the greater praise:
The less advantage to the strife he brought,
The greater wonders has his prowess wrought;
He who depends upon his wind and limbs,
Needs neither cork or bladder when he swims;
Nor will by empty breath be puff'd along,
As not himself — but in his helpers — strong.

Suffice it then, our Hero's name was clear,
For, call *John Dighton*, and he answer'd "Here!"

(1) [This tale was suggested by some passages in that extraordinary work, "The Memoirs of the Forty-five first Years of the Life of James Lackington, Bookseller, written by Himself," London. 8vo. 1791.]

But who that name in early life assign'd
He never found, he never tried to find;.
Whether his kindred were to John disgrace,
Or John to them, is a disputed case;
His infant-state owed nothing to their care—
His mind neglected, and his body bare; (1)
All his success must on himself depend,
He had no money, counsel, guide, or friend;
But in a market-town an active boy
Appear'd, and sought in various ways employ;
Who soon, thus cast upon the world, began
To show the talents of a thriving man.

With spirit high John learn'd the world to brave,
And in both senses was a ready knave;
Knave as of old, obedient, keen, and quick,
Knave as at present, skill'd to shift and trick;
Some humble part of many trades he caught,
He for the builder and the painter wrought;
For serving-maids on secret errands ran,
The waiter's helper, and the hostler's man;
And when he chanced (oft chanced he) place to lose,
His varying genius shone in blacking shoes:
A midnight fisher by the pond he stood,
Assistant poacher, he o'erlook'd the wood;
At an election John's impartial mind
Was to no cause nor candidate confined;

(1) ["Neither myself, my brothers, or sisters, are indebted to a father scarcely for any thing that can endear his memory, or cause us to reflect on him with pleasure. His habitual drunkenness shortened his days. My mother then became so poor, that she could not afford two pence per week for my schooling."—LACKINGTON, p. 33.]

To all in turn he full allegiance swore,
And in his hat the various badges bore:
His liberal soul with every sect agreed,
Unheard their reasons, he received their creed;
At church he deign'd the organ-pipes to fill,
And at the meeting sang both loud and shrill:
But the full purse these different merits gain'd,
By strong demands his lively passions drain'd;
Liquors he loved of each inflaming kind,
To midnight revels flew with ardent mind;
Too warm at cards, a losing game he play'd,
To fleecing beauty his attention paid; (1)
His boiling passions were by oaths express'd,
And lies he made his profit and his jest.

Such was the boy, and such the man had been,
But fate or happier fortune changed the scene;
A fever seized him, "He should surely die—"
He fear'd, and lo! a friend was praying by;
With terror moved, this Teacher he address'd,
And all the errors of his youth confess'd:
The good man kindly clear'd the Sinner's way
To lively hope, and counsell'd him to pray;
Who then resolved, should he from sickness rise,
To quit cards, liquors, poaching, oaths, and lies:
His health restored, he yet resolved, and grew
True to his masters, to their Meeting true;

(1) ["I was first converted to Methodism at sixteen, and from that time until I was twenty-one I was a sincere enthusiast, meeting in societies, learning hymns, &c. But, alas! my godly life at length suffered interruption, and I entered into scenes of riot and dissipation. I became acquainted with, or infatuated by, the beautiful Nancy Trott, and could not resist the fair tempter," &c. — *Ibid.*, p. 79.]

His old companions at his sober face
Laugh'd loud, while he, attesting it was grace,
With tears besought them all his calling to embrace: (1)
To his new friends such Convert gave applause,
Life to their zeal, and glory to their cause:
Though terror wrought the mighty change, yet strong
Was the impression, and it lasted long;
John at the lectures due attendance paid,
A convert meek, obedient, and afraid.
His manners strict, though form'd on fear alone,
Pleased the grave friends, nor less his solemn tone,
The lengthen'd face of care, the low and inward groan:
The stern good men exulted, when they saw
Those timid looks of penitence and awe;
Nor thought that one so passive, humble, meek,
Had yet a creed and principles to seek.

The Faith that Reason finds, confirms, avows
The hopes, the views, the comforts she allows—
These were not his, who by his feelings found,
And by them only, that his faith was sound;
Feelings of terror these, for evil past,
Feelings of hope, to be received at last;

(1) ["I now grew weary of dissipating my time, and for want of something else to do, I went one evening to meeting, and as there was a kind of vacuity in my mind, when I came to hear the preacher, all my fanatical notions returned full upon me, and I was once more carried away by the tide of enthusiasm. My friends saw with indignation the wonderful alteration in me, who, from a gay, dissipated, young fellow, was at once metamorphosed into a dull, moping, praying, psalm-singing fanatic, continually reprehending all about me for their harmless mirth and gaiety."—*Ibid.*, p. 94.]

Now weak, now lively, changing with the day,
These were his feelings, and he felt his way.

Sprung from such sources, will this faith remain
While these supporters can their strength retain:
As heaviest weights the deepest rivers pass,
While icy chains fast bind the solid mass;
So, born of feelings, faith remains secure,
Long as their firmness and their strength endure:
But when the waters in their channel glide,
A bridge must bear us o'er the threat'ning tide;
Such bridge is Reason, and there Faith relies,
Whether the varying spirits fall or rise.

His patrons, still disposed their aid to lend,
Behind a counter placed their humble friend;
Where pens and paper were on shelves display'd,
And pious pamphlets on the windows laid: (1)
By nature active, and from vice restrain'd,
Increasing trade his bolder views sustain'd;
His friends and teachers, finding so much zeal
In that young convert whom they taught to feel,
His trade encouraged, and were pleased to find
A hand so ready, with such humble mind.

And now, his health restored, his spirits eased,
He wish'd to marry, if the teachers pleased.

(1) ["As we sat at work in our room, Mr. Boyd, one of Mr. Wesley's people, called and informed me that a little shop was to be let. I observed to him that I loved books, and that if I could but be a bookseller I should then have plenty of books to read. On this, he assured me, that he would get the shop for me," &c. — *Ibid.*, p. 130.]

They, not unwilling, from the virgin-class,
Took him a comely and a courteous lass;
Simple and civil, loving and beloved,
She long a fond and faithful partner proved;
In every year the elders and the priest
Were duly summon'd to a christening feast;
Nor came a babe, but by his growing trade,
John had provision for the coming made;
For friends and strangers all were pleased to deal
With one whose care was equal to his zeal.

In human friendships, it compels a sigh,
To think what trifles will dissolve the tie.
John, now become a master of his trade,
Perceived how much improvement might be made;
And as this prospect open'd to his view,
A certain portion of his zeal withdrew;
His fear abated — "What had he to fear —
"His profits certain, and his conscience clear?"
Above his door a board was placed by John,
And "Dighton, Stationer," was gilt thereon;
His window next, enlarged to twice the size,
Shone with such trinkets as the simple prize;
While in the shop with pious works were seen
The last new play, review, or magazine:
In orders punctual, he observed — "The books
"He never read, and could he judge their looks?
"Readers and critics should their merits try,
"He had no office but to sell and buy;
"Like other traders, profit was his care;
"Of what they print, the authors must beware."

He held his patrons and his teachers dear,
But with his trade — they must not interfere.

'T was certain now that John had lost the dread
And pious thoughts that once such terrors bred;
His habits varied, and he more inclined
To the vain world, which he had half-resign'd:
He had moreover in his brethren seen,
Or he imagined, craft, conceit, and spleen;
"They are but men," said John, "and shall I then
"Fear man's control, or stand in awe of men?
"'T is their advice (their Convert's rule and law),
"And good it is—I will not stand in awe."

Moreover Dighton, though he thought of books
As one who chiefly on the title looks,
Yet sometimes ponder'd o'er a page to find,
When vex'd with cares, amusement for his mind;
And by degrees that mind had treasured much
From works his teachers were afraid to touch:
Satiric novels, poets bold and free,
And what their writers term philosophy; (1)
All these were read, and he began to feel
Some self-approval on his bosom steal.

(1) ["My mind now began to expand, intellectual light and pleasure broke in, and dispelled the gloom of fanatical melancholy. It was in one of these cheerful moods that I one day took up the 'Life of John Buncle;' I also received great benefits from reading 'Coventry's Philemon to Hydaspes;' and began to enjoy many innocent pleasures and recreations in life, without the fear of being eternally damned for a laugh, a joke, or for spending a sociable evening with a few friends, going to the play-house, &c. In a year or two after, I began with metaphysics, in the intricate, though pleasing labyrinths of which I have occasionally since wandered. Having begun to think rationally, and reason freely on religious matters, I did not long remain with the methodists," &c. — *Ibid.*, p. 155.]

Wisdom creates humility, but he
Who thus collects it, will not humble be:
No longer John was fill'd with pure delight
And humble reverence in a pastor's sight;
Who, like a grateful zealot, listening stood,
To hear a man so friendly and so good;
But felt the dignity of one who made
Himself important by a thriving trade;
And growing pride in Dighton's mind was bred
By the strange food on which it coarsely fed.

Their Brother's fall the grieving Brethren heard—
His pride indeed to all around appear'd;
The world, his friends agreed, had won the soul
From its best hopes, the man from their control.
To make him humble, and confine his views
Within their bounds, and books which they peruse,
A deputation from these friends select,
Might reason with him to some good effect;
Arm'd with authority, and led by love,
They might those follies from his mind remove;
Deciding thus, and with this kind intent,
A chosen body with its speaker went.

"John," said the Teacher, "John," with great concern,
"We see thy frailty, and thy fate discern—
"Satan with toils thy simple soul beset,
"And thou art careless, slumbering in the net;
"Unmindful art thou of thy early vow;
"Who at the morning-meeting sees thee now?

" Who at the evening? where is brother John?
" We ask—are answer'd, To the tavern gone:
" Thee on the sabbath seldom we behold;
" Thou canst not sing, thou'rt nursing for a cold:
" This from the churchmen thou hast learn'd, for
they
" Have colds and fevers on the sabbath-day;
" When in some snug warm room they sit, and pen
" Bills from their ledgers—world-entangled men!

" See with what pride thou hast enlarged thy
shop;
" To view thy tempting stores the heedless stop;(1)
" By what strange names dost thou these baubles
know,
" Which wantons wear, to make a sinful show?
" Hast thou in view these idle volumes placed
" To be the pander of a vicious taste?
" What's here! a book of dances!—you advance
" In goodly knowledge—John, wilt learn to dance?
" How! ' *Go*—' it says, and ' *to the devil go!*
" ' *And shake thyself!*' I tremble—but 't is so——

(1) ["I had no sooner left the Society than I found that I had incurred the hatred of some, the envy of many, and the displeasure of all; so that for a long time I was constantly teased with their impertinent nonsense. I believe that never was poor devil so plagued. Some as they passed by my door, in their way to the tabernacle, would only make a stop and lift up their hands, turn up the whites of their eyes, shake their heads, groan, and pass on. Many would call in and take me aside, and after making rueful faces, address me with, 'Oh, brother Lackington! I am very sorry to find, that you who began in the spirit are now like to end in the flesh. Pray, brother, do remember Lot's wife.' Others called to know if I was as happy then as I was when I constantly sought the Lord with my brethren, in prayer-meeting, in class, and in band. One preacher assured me that I was lost, and that the devil would soon toss me about the flames of hell with a pitchfork."—*Ibid.*, p. 162.]

" Wretch as thou art, what answer canst thou make?
" Oh! without question, *thou* wilt go and shake.
" What's here? the 'School for Scandal' (1)—
pretty schools!
" Well, and art thou proficient in the rules?
" Art thou a pupil, is it thy design
" To make our names contemptible as thine?
" '*Old Nick, a novel!*' (2) oh! 'tis mighty well—
" A fool has courage when he laughs at hell;
" 'Frolic and Fun,' the 'Humours of Tim Grin;'
" Why, John, thou grow'st facetious in thy sin;
" And what?—'*the Archdeacon's Charge*'!—'tis
mighty well—
" If Satan publish'd, thou wouldst doubtless sell;
" Jests, novels, dances, and this precious stuff
" To crown thy folly—we have seen enough;
" We find thee fitted for each evil work;
" Do print the Koran, and become a Turk.

" John, thou art lost; success and worldly pride
" O'er all thy thoughts and purposes preside,
" Have bound thee fast, and drawn thee far aside:
" Yet turn; these sin-traps from thy shop expel,
" Repent and pray, and all may yet be well.

" And here thy wife, thy Dorothy, behold,
" How fashion's wanton robes her form infold!
" Can grace, can goodness with such trappings
" John, thou hast made thy wife a Jezebel: [dwell?

(1) ["The "School for Scandal," a celebrated comedy by Sheridan.]
(2) ["Old Nick," a satirical story, in three volumes, by Edward Du Bois, Esq.]

" See! on her bosom rests the sign of sin,
" The glaring proof of naughty thoughts within;
" What! 't is a cross; come hither—as a friend,
" Thus from thy neck the shameful badge I rend."

" Rend, if you dare," said Dighton; " you shall find
" A man of spirit, though to peace inclined;
" Call me ungrateful! have I not my pay
" At all times ready for the expected day?—
" To share my plenteous board you deign to come,
" Myself your pupil, and my house your home;
" And shall the persons who my meat enjoy
" Talk of my faults, and treat me as a boy?
" Have you not told how Rome's insulting priests
" Led their meek laymen like a herd of beasts;
" And by their fleecing and their forgery made
" Their holy calling an accursed trade?
" Can you such acts and insolence condemn,
" Who to your utmost power resemble them?

" Concerns it you what books I set for sale?
" The tale perchance may be a virtuous tale;
" And for the rest, 't is neither wise nor just,
" In you, who read not, to condemn on trust;
" Why should the Archdeacon's Charge your spleen excite?
" He, or perchance th' Archbishop, may be right.

" That from your meetings I refrain, is true;
" I meet with nothing pleasant—nothing new;

" But the same proofs, that not one text explain,
" And the same lights, where all things dark remain;
" I thought you saints on earth—but I have found
" Some sins among you, and the best unsound;
" You have your failings, like the crowds below,
" And at your pleasure hot and cold can blow:
" When I at first your grave deportment saw,
" (I own my folly), I was fill'd with awe;
" You spoke so warmly, and it seemed so well,
" I should have thought it treason to rebel;
" Is it a wonder that a man like me
" Should such perfection in such teachers see;
" Nay, should conceive you sent from Heav'n to brave
" The host of sin, and sinful souls to save?
" But as our reason wakes, our prospects clear,
" And failings, flaws, and blemishes appear.

" When you were mounted in your rostrum high,
" We shrank beneath your tone, your frown, your eye;
" Then you beheld us abject, fallen, low,
" And felt your glory from our baseness grow;
" Touch'd by your words, I trembled like the rest,
" And my own vileness and your power confess'd:
" These, I exclaim'd, are men divine, and gazed
" On him who taught, delighted and amazed;
" Glad when he finish'd, if by chance he cast
" One look on such a sinner, as he pass'd.

" But when I view'd you in a clearer light,
" And saw the frail and carnal appetite;

" When, at his humble pray'r, you deign'd to eat,
" Saints as you are, a civil sinner's meat;
" When as you sat contented and at ease,
" Nibbling at leisure on the ducks and peas, (1)
" And, pleased some comforts in such place to find,
" You could descend to be a little kind;
" And gave us hope, in heaven there might be room
" For a few souls beside your own to come;
" While this world's good engaged your carnal view,
" And like a sinner you enjoy'd it too;
" All this perceiving, can you think it strange
" That change in you should work an equal change?"

"Wretch that thou art," an elder cried, " and gone
" For everlasting." (2) —— " Go thyself," said John;
" Depart this instant, let me hear no more;
" My house my castle is, and that my door."

The hint they took, and from the door withdrew,
And John to meeting bade a long adieu;
Attach'd to business, he in time became
A wealthy man of no inferior name.
It seem'd, alas! in John's deluded sight,
That all was wrong because not all was right;

(1) ["The preachers were continually reprobating the practice of masters and mistresses keeping servants at home on Sundays to dress dinners. But great was my surprise on discovering that these very men, who were continually preaching up fasting, abstinence, &c., to their congregation, and who wanted others to dine off cold dinners, or eat bread and cheese, would themselves not even sup without roasted fowls," &c. — LACKINGTON, p. 158.]

(2) ["They piously and charitably consigned me over to be tormented by the devil, and everywhere declared, that I was turned a downright atheist." — *Ibid.*, p. 165.]

And when he found his teachers had their stains,
Resentment and not reason broke his chains:
Thus on his feelings he again relied,
And never look'd to reason for his guide:
Could he have wisely view'd the frailty shown,
And rightly weigh'd their wanderings and his own,
He might have known that men may be sincere,
Though gay and feasting on the savoury cheer;
That doctrines sound and sober they may teach,
Who love to eat with all the glee they preach;
Nay! who believe the duck, the grape, the pine,
Were not intended for the dog and swine:
But Dighton's hasty mind on every theme
Ran from the truth, and rested in th' extreme:
Flaws in his friends he found, and then withdrew
(Vain of his knowledge) from their virtues too.
Best of his books he loved the liberal kind,
That, if they improve not, still enlarge the mind;
And found himself, with such advisers, free
From a fix'd creed, as mind enlarged could be.
His humble wife at these opinions sigh'd,
But her he never heeded till she died;
He then assented to a last request,
And by the meeting-window let her rest;
And on her stone the sacred text was seen,
Which had her comfort in departing been.

Dighton with joy beheld his trade advance,
Yet seldom publish'd, loth to trust to chance:
Then wed a doctor's sister — poor indeed,
But skill'd in works her husband could not read;

Who, if he wish'd new ways of wealth to seek,
Could make her half-crown pamphlet in a week:
This he rejected, though without disdain,
And chose the old and certain way to gain.

Thus he proceeded; trade increased the while,
And fortune woo'd him with perpetual smile:
On early scenes he sometimes cast a thought,
When on his heart the mighty change was wrought;
And all the ease and comfort Converts find
Was magnified in his reflecting mind:
Then on the teacher's priestly pride he dwelt,
That caused his freedom, but with this he felt
The danger of the free — for since that day
No guide had shown, no brethren join'd his way;
Forsaking one, he found no second creed,
But reading doubted, doubting what to read.

Still, though reproof had brought some present pain,
The gain he made was fair and honest gain;
He laid his wares indeed in public view,
But that all traders claim a right to do:
By means like these, he saw his wealth increase,
And felt his consequence, and dwelt in peace.

Our Hero's age was threescore years and five,
When he exclaim'd, "Why longer should I strive?"
"Why more amass, who never must behold
"A young John Dighton to make glad the old?"
(The sons he had, to early graves were gone,
And girls were burdens to the mind of John.)

" Had I a boy, he would our name sustain,
" That now to nothing must return again;
" But what are all my profits, credit, trade,
" And parish-honours? — folly and parade."

Thus Dighton thought, and in his looks appear'd
Sadness, increased by much he saw and heard:
The Brethren often at the shop would stay,
And make their comments ere they walk'd away:
They mark'd the window, fill'd in every pane
With lawless prints of reputations slain;
Distorted forms of men with honours graced,
And our chief rulers in derision placed:
Amazed they stood, remembering well the days
When to be humble was their brother's praise;
When at the dwelling of their friend they stopp'd
To drop a word, or to receive it dropp'd;
Where they beheld the prints of men renown'd,
And far-famed preachers pasted all around;
(Such mouths! eyes! hair! so prim! so fierce! so sleek!
They look'd as speaking what is wo to speak):
On these the passing brethren loved to dwell —
How long they spake! how strongly! warmly! well!
What power had each to dive in mysteries deep,
To warm the cold, to make the harden'd weep;
To lure, to fright, to soothe, to awe the soul,
And list'ning flocks to lead and to control!

But now discoursing, as they linger'd near,
They tempted John (whom they accused) to hear

Their weighty charge—" And can the lost-one feel,
" As in the time of duty, love, and zeal;
" When all were summon'd at the rising sun,
" And he was ready with his friends to run;
" When he, partaking with a chosen few,
" Felt the great change, sensation rich and new?
" No! all is lost, her favours Fortune shower'd
" Upon the man, and he is overpower'd;
" The world has won him with its tempting store
" Of needless wealth, and that has made him poor:
" Success undoes him; he has risen to fall,
" Has gain'd a fortune, and has lost his all;
" Gone back from Sion, he will find his age
" Loth to commence a second pilgrimage;
" He has retreated from the chosen track;
" And now must ever bear the burden on his back."

Hurt by such censure, John began to find
Fresh revolutions working in his mind;
He sought for comfort in his books, but read
Without a plan or method in his head;
What once amused, now rather made him sad;
What should inform, increased the doubts he had;
Shame would not let him seek at Church a guide,
And from his Meeting he was held by pride;
His wife derided fears she never felt,
And passing brethren daily censures dealt;
Hope for a son was now for ever past,
He was the first John Dighton and the last;
His stomach fail'd, his case the doctor knew,
But said, " he still might hold a year or two;"

" No more ! " he said, " but why should I complain ?
" A life of doubt must be a life of pain :
" Could I be sure — but why should I despair ?
" I'm sure my conduct has been just and fair ;
" In youth, indeed, I had a wicked will,
" But I repented, and have sorrow still :
" I had my comforts, and a growing trade
" Gave greater pleasure than a fortune made ;
" And as I more possess'd and reason'd more,
" I lost those comforts I enjoy'd before,
" When reverend guides I saw my table round,
" And in my guardian guest my safety found :
" Now sick and sad, no appetite, no ease,
" Nor pleasures have I, nor a wish to please ;
" Nor views, nor hopes, nor plans, nor taste have I,
" Yet sick of life, have no desire to die."

He said and died : his trade, his name is gone
And all that once gave consequence to John.

Unhappy Dighton ! had he found a friend,
When conscience told him it was time to mend ;
A friend discreet, considerate, kind, sincere,
Who would have shown the grounds of hope and fear,
And proved that spirits, whether high or low,
No certain tokens of man's safety show ;
Had Reason ruled him in her proper place,
And Virtue led him while he lean'd on grace ;
Had he while zealous been discreet and pure,
His knowledge humble, and his hope secure ; —
These guides had placed him on the solid rock,
Where Faith had rested, nor received a shock ;

But his, alas! was placed upon the sand,
Where long it stood not, and where none can stand. (1)

(1) ['The Convert' teaches a useful lesson. John Dighton was bred a blackguard; and we have here a most lively and complete description of the items that go to the composition of that miscellaneous character; but being sore reduced by a long fever, falls into the hands of the Methodists, and becomes an exemplary convert. He is then set up by the congregation in a small stationer's shop; and, as he begins to thrive in business, adds worldly literature to the evangelical tracts which composed his original stock in trade. This scandalizes the brethren; and John, having no principles or knowledge, falls out with the sect, and can never settle in the creed of any other; and so lives perplexed and discontented — and dies in agitation and terror. — JEFFREY.

Such was not, however, the ultimate fate of Lackington. In 1798, he retired from his shop in Finsbury Square, to which he had given the title of "Temple of the Muses," and went to spend the evening of life at Thornbury, in Gloucestershire. In 1803, he published his "Confessions," in which he gives a detail of his *reconversion* to Methodism. Before his death, which took place in 1815, he expended 3000*l.* upon the erection of a Wesleyan chapel, to which he added a salary of 150*l.* per annum for the preacher. In the front of the building appears this inscription: — "This Temple is erected as a monument of God's mercy, in convincing an Infidel of the important Truths of Christianity."]

TALE XX.

THE BROTHERS.

—— A brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
My practice may ride easy. — *Lear.*

—— He lets me feed with hinds,
Bars me the place of brother. — *As You Like It.*

—— 'T was I, but 't is not I: I do not shame
To tell you what I was, being what I am. — *As You Like It.*

TALE XX.

THE BROTHERS. (1)

THAN old *George Fletcher*, on the British coast,
Dwelt not a seaman who had more to boast;
Kind, simple, and sincere — he seldom spoke,
But sometimes sang and chorus'd — "Hearts of oak;"
In dangers steady, with his lot content,
His days in labour and in love were spent.

He left a Son so like him, that the old
With joy exclaim'd, "'Tis Fletcher we behold;"
But to his Brother when the kinsmen came,
And view'd his form, they grudged the father's name.

George was a bold, intrepid, careless lad,
With just the failings that his father had;

(1) [Mr. Crabbe, ever a tender and beneficent brother, sent his sister, the late Mrs. Sparkes, to a millinery establishment at Ipswich, with the first money he received at Belvoir; and, gratefully attached as she was in return, there is reason to believe that this tale was composed during a little transitory coldness, which — how originating it is now forgotten — had interrupted their affection.]

Isaac was weak, attentive, slow, exact,
With just the virtues that his father lack'd.

George lived at sea: upon the land a guest —
He sought for recreation, not for rest —
While, far unlike, his brother's feebler form
Shrank from the cold, and shudder'd at the storm;
Still with the Seaman's to connect his trade,
The boy was bound where blocks and ropes were made.

George, strong and sturdy, had a tender mind,
And was to Isaac pitiful and kind;
A very father, till his art was gain'd,
And then a friend unwearied he remain'd;
He saw his brother was of spirit low,
His temper peevish, and his motions slow;
Not fit to bustle in a world, or make
Friends to his fortune for his merit's sake;
But the kind sailor could not boast the art
Of looking deeply in the human heart;
Else had he seen that this weak brother knew
What men to court — what objects to pursue;
That he to distant gain the way discern'd,
And none so crooked but his genius learn'd.

Isaac was poor, and this the brother felt;
He hired a house, and there the Landman dwelt;
Wrought at his trade, and had an easy home,
For there would George with cash and comforts come;
And when they parted, Isaac look'd around,
Where other friends and helpers might be found.

He wish'd for some port-place, and one might fall,
He wisely thought, if he should try for all;
He had a vote — and were it well applied,
Might have its worth — and he had views beside;
Old Burgess Steel was able to promote
An humble man who served him with a vote;
For Isaac felt not what some tempers feel,
But bow'd and bent the neck to Burgess Steel;
And great attention to a Lady gave,
His ancient friend, a maiden spare and grave:
One whom the visage long and look demure
Of Isaac pleased — he seem'd sedate and pure;
And his soft heart conceived a gentle flame
For her who waited on this virtuous dame:
Not an outrageous love, a scorching fire,
But friendly liking and chastised desire;
And thus he waited, patient in delay,
In present favour and in fortune's way.

George then was coasting — war was yet delay'd,
And what he gain'd was to his brother paid;
Nor ask'd the Seaman what he saved or spent;
But took his grog, wrought hard, and was content;
Till war awaked the land, and George began
To think what part became a useful man:
"Press'd, I must go; why, then, 't is better far
"At once to enter like a British tar,
"Than a brave captain and the foe to shun,
"As if I fear'd the music of a gun."
"Go not!" said Isaac — "You shall wear disguise."
"What!" said the Seaman, "clothe myself with lies!" —

"Oh! but there's danger."—"Danger in the fleet?
"You cannot mean, good brother, of defeat;
"And other dangers I at land must share —
"So now adieu! and trust a brother's care."

Isaac awhile demurr'd — but, in his heart,
So might he share, he was disposed to part:
The better mind will sometimes feel the pain
Of benefactions—favour is a chain;
But they the feeling scorn, and what they wish, disdain; —
While beings form'd in coarser mould will hate
The helping hand they ought to venerate;
No wonder George should in this cause prevail,
With one contending who was glad to fail:
"Isaac, farewell! do wipe that doleful eye;
"Crying we came, and groaning we may die;
"Let us do something 'twixt the groan and cry:
"And hear me, brother, whether pay or prize,
"One half to thee I give and I devise;
"For thou hast oft occasion for the aid
"Of learn'd physicians, and they will be paid;
"Their wives and children, men support, at sea,
"And thou, my lad, art wife and child to me:
"Farewell! — I go where hope and honour call,
"Nor does it follow that who fights must fall."

Isaac here made a poor attempt to speak,
And a huge tear moved slowly down his cheek;
Like Pluto's iron drop, hard sign of grace,
It slowly roll'd upon the rueful face,
Forced by the striving will alone its way to trace.

Years fled — war lasted — George at sea remain'd,
While the slow Landman still his profits gain'd:
A humble place was vacant — he besought
His patron's interest, and the office caught;
For still the Virgin was his faithful friend,
And one so sober could with truth commend,
Who of his own defects most humbly thought,
And their advice with zeal and reverence sought:
Whom thus the Mistress praised, the Maid approved,
And her he wedded whom he wisely loved.

No more he needs assistance — but, alas!
He fears the money will for liquor pass;
Or that the Seaman might to flatterers lend,
Or give support to some pretended friend:
Still he must write — he wrote, and he confess'd
That, till absolved, he should be sore distress'd;
But one so friendly would, he thought, forgive
The hasty deed — Heav'n knew how he should live;
"But you," he added, "as a man of sense,
"Have well consider'd danger and expense:
"I ran, alas! into the fatal snare,
"And now for trouble must my mind prepare;
"And how, with children, I shall pick my way,
"Through a hard world, is more than I can say:
"Then change not, Brother, your more happy state,
"Or on the hazard long deliberate."

George answer'd gravely, "It is right and fit,
"In all our crosses, humbly to submit:
"Your apprehensions are unwise, unjust;
"Forbear repining, and expel distrust."—

He added, " Marriage was the joy of life,"
And gave his service to his brother's wife;
Then vow'd to bear in all expense a part,
And thus concluded, " Have a cheerful heart."

Had the glad Isaac been his brother's guide,
In the same terms the Seaman had replied;
At such reproofs the crafty Landman smiled,
And softly said — " This creature is a child."

Twice had the gallant ship a capture made —
And when in port the happy crew were paid,
Home went the Sailor, with his pockets stored,
Ease to enjoy, and pleasure to afford;
His time was short, joy shone in every face,
Isaac half fainted in the fond embrace:
The wife resolved her honour'd guest to please,
The children clung upon their uncle's knees;
The grog went round, the neighbours drank his health,
And George exclaim'd — " Ah! what to this is wealth?
" Better," said he, " to bear a loving heart,
" Than roll in riches —— but we now must part!"

All yet is still — but hark! the winds o'ersweep
The rising waves, and howl upon the deep;
Ships late becalm'd on mountain-billows ride —
So life is threaten'd, and so man is tried.

Ill were the tidings that arrived from sea,
The worthy George must now a cripple be;

His leg was lopp'd; and though his heart was sound,
Though his brave captain was with glory crown'd —
Yet much it vex'd him to repose on shore,
An idle log, and be of use no more:
True, he was sure that Isaac would receive
All of his Brother that the foe might leave;
To whom the Seaman his design had sent,
Ere from the port the wounded hero went:
His wealth and expectations told, he "knew
"Wherein they fail'd, what Isaac's love would do;
"That he the grog and cabin would supply,
"Where George at anchor during life would lie."

The Landman read — and, reading, grew distress'd: —
"Could he resolve t' admit so poor a guest?
"Better at Greenwich might the Sailor stay,
"Unless his purse could for his comforts pay;"
So Isaac judged, and to his wife appeal'd,
But yet acknowledged it was best to yield:
"Perhaps his pension, with what sums remain
"Due or unsquander'd, may the man maintain;
"Refuse we must not." — With a heavy sigh
The lady heard, and made her kind reply: —
"Nor would I wish it, Isaac, were we sure
"How long this crazy building will endure;
"Like an old house, that every day appears
"About to fall — he may be propp'd for years;
"For a few months, indeed, we might comply,
"But these old batter'd fellows never die."

The hand of Isaac, George on entering took,
With love and resignation in his look;
Declared his comfort in the fortune past,
And joy to find his anchor safely cast;
"Call then my nephews, let the grog be brought,
"And I will tell them how the ship was fought."

Alas! our simple Seaman should have known,
That all the care, the kindness, he had shown,
Were from his Brother's heart, if not his memory, flown:
All swept away to be perceived no more,
Like idle structures on the sandy shore;
The chance amusement of the playful boy,
That the rude billows in their rage destroy.

Poor George confess'd, though loth the truth to find,
Slight was his knowledge of a Brother's mind:
The vulgar pipe was to the wife offence,
The frequent grog to Isaac an expense;
Would friends like hers, she question'd, "choose to come,
"Where clouds of poison'd fume defiled a room?
"This could their Lady-friend, and Burgess Steel,
"(Teased with his worship's asthma) bear to feel?
"Could they associate or converse with him—
'A loud rough sailor with a timber limb?"

Cold as he grew, still Isaac strove to show,
By well-feign'd care, that cold he could not grow;

And when he saw his brother look distress'd,
He strove some petty comforts to suggest;
On his wife solely their neglect to lay,
And then t' excuse it, as a woman's way;
He too was chidden when her rules he broke,
And then she sicken'd at the scent of smoke.

George, though in doubt, was still consoled to find
His Brother wishing to be reckon'd kind:
That Isaac seem'd concern'd by his distress,
Gave to his injured feelings some redress;
But none he found disposed to lend an ear
To stories, all were once intent to hear:
Except his nephew, seated on his knee,
He found no creature cared about the sea;
But George indeed—for George they call'd the boy,
When his good uncle was their boast and joy—
Would listen long, and would contend with sleep,
To hear the woes and wonders of the deep;
Till the fond mother cried—"That man will teach
"The foolish boy his loud and boisterous speech."
So judged the father—and the boy was taught
To shun the uncle, whom his love had sought.

The mask of kindness now but seldom worn,
George felt each evil harder to be borne;
And cried (vexation growing day by day),
"Ah! brother Isaac!—What! I'm in the way!"
"No! on my credit, look ye, No! but I
"Am fond of peace, and my repose would buy
"On any terms—in short, we must comply;

"My spouse had money—she must have her will—
"Ah! Brother—marriage is a bitter pill."—

George tried the lady—"Sister, I offend."
"Me?" she replied—"Oh no!—you may depend
"On my regard—but watch your Brother's way,
"Whom I, like you, must study and obey."

"Ah!" thought the Seaman, "what a head was mine,
"That easy birth at Greenwich to resign!
"I'll to the parish"——but a little pride,
And some affection, put the thought aside.

Now gross neglect and open scorn he bore
In silent sorrow—but he felt the more:
The odious pipe he to the kitchen took,
Or strove to profit by some pious book.

When the mind stoops to this degraded state,
New griefs will darken the dependent's fate;
"Brother!" said Isaac, "you will sure excuse
"The little freedom I'm compell'd to use:
"My wife's relations—(curse the haughty crew)—
"Affect such niceness, and such dread of you:
"You speak so loud—and they have natures soft—
"Brother——I wish——do go upon the loft!"

Poor George obey'd, and to the garret fled,
Where not a being saw the tears he shed:

But more was yet required, for guests were come,
Who could not dine if he disgraced the room.
It shock'd his spirit to be esteem'd unfit
With an own brother and his wife to sit;
He grew rebellious—at the vestry spoke
For weekly aid——they heard it as a joke:
"So kind a brother, and so wealthy——you
"Apply to us?——No! this will never do:
"Good neighbour Fletcher," said the Overseer,
"We are engaged—you can have nothing here!"

George mutter'd something in despairing tone,
Then sought his loft, to think and grieve alone;
Neglected, slighted, restless on his bed,
With heart half broken, and with scraps ill fed;
Yet was he pleased, that hours for play design'd
Were given to ease his ever-troubled mind;
The child still listen'd with increasing joy,
And he was sooth'd by the attentive boy.

At length he sicken'd, and this duteous child
Watch'd o'er his sickness, and his pains beguiled;
The mother bade him from the loft refrain,
But, though with caution, yet he went again;
And now his tales the Sailor feebly told,
His heart was heavy, and his limbs were cold:
The tender boy came often to entreat
His good kind friend would of his presents eat;
Purloin'd or purchased, for he saw, with shame,
The food untouch'd that to his uncle came;
Who, sick in body and in mind, received
The boy's indulgence, gratified and grieved.

"Uncle will die!" said George—the piteous wife
Exclaim'd, "she saw no value in his life;
"But, sick or well, to my commands attend,
"And go no more to your complaining friend."
The boy was vex'd, he felt his heart reprove
The stern decree.—What! punish'd for his love!
No! he would go, but softly, to the room,
Stealing in silence—for he knew his doom.

Once in a week the father came to say,
"George, are you ill?"—and hurried him away;
Yet to his wife would on their duties dwell,
And often cry, "Do use my brother well:"
And something kind, no question, Isaac meant,
Who took vast credit for the vague intent.

But truly kind, the gentle boy essay'd
To cheer his uncle, firm, although afraid;
But now the father caught him at the door,
And, swearing—yes, the man in office swore,
And cried, "Away! How! Brother, I'm surprised,
"That one so old can be so ill advised:
"Let him not dare to visit you again,
"Your cursed stories will disturb his brain;
"Is it not vile to court a foolish boy,
"Your own absurd narrations to enjoy?
"What! sullen!—ha, George Fletcher! you shall see,
"Proud as you are, your bread depends on me!"

He spoke, and, frowning, to his dinner went,
Then cool'd and felt some qualms of discontent;

And thought on times when he compell'd his son
To hear these stories, nay, to beg for one:
But the wife's wrath o'ercame the brother's pain,
And shame was felt, and conscience rose in vain.

George yet stole up; he saw his Uncle lie
Sick on the bed, and heard his heavy sigh:
So he resolved, before he went to rest,
To comfort one so dear and so distress'd;
Then watch'd his time, but with a child-like art,
Betray'd a something treasured at his heart:
Th' observant wife remark'd, "the boy is grown
"So like your brother, that he seems his own;
"So close and sullen! and I still suspect
"They often meet—do watch them and detect."

George now remark'd that all was still as night,
And hasten'd up with terror and delight;
"Uncle!" he cried, and softly tapp'd the door;
"Do let me in"—but he could add no more;
The careful father caught him in the fact,
And cried,—"You serpent! is it thus you act?
"Back to your mother!"—and, with hasty blow,
He sent th' indignant boy to grieve below;
Then at the door an angry speech began—
"Is this your conduct?—Is it thus you plan?
"Seduce my child, and make my house a scene
"Of vile dispute——What is it that you mean?—
"George, are you dumb? do learn to know your friends,
"And think awhile on whom your bread depends:

" What! not a word? be thankful I am cool—
" But, sir, beware, nor longer play the fool:
" Come! brother, come! what is it that you seek
" By this rebellion?—Speak, you villain, speak!—
" Weeping! I warrant—sorrow makes you dumb:
" I'll ope your mouth, impostor! if I come:
" Let me approach—I'll shake you from the bed,
" You stubborn dog——Oh God! my Brother's dead!—"

Timid was Isaac, and in all the past
He felt a purpose to be kind at last;
Nor did he mean his brother to depart,
Till he had shown this kindness of his heart:
But day by day he put the cause aside,
Induced by av'rice, peevishness, or pride.

But now awaken'd, from this fatal time
His conscience Isaac felt, and found his crime:
He raised to George a monumental stone,
And there retired to sigh and think alone;
An ague seized him, he grew pale, and shook—
" So," said his son, " would my poor Uncle look."
" And so, my child, shall I like him expire."
" No! you have physic and a cheerful fire."
" Unhappy sinner! yes, I'm well supplied
" With every comfort my cold heart denied."
He view'd his Brother now, but not as one
Who vex'd his wife, by fondness for her son;
Not as with wooden limb, and seaman's tale,
The odious pipe, vile grog, or humbler ale:

He now the worth and grief alone can view
Of one so mild, so generous, and so true;
" The frank, kind Brother, with such open heart,
" And I to break it——'twas a dæmon's part!"

So Isaac now, as led by conscience, feels,
Nor his unkindness palliates or conceals;
" This is your folly," said his heartless wife:
" Alas! my folly cost my Brother's life;
" It suffer'd him to languish and decay,
" My gentle brother, whom I could not pay,
" And therefore left to pine, and fret his life away!"

He takes his Son, and bids the boy unfold
All the good Uncle of his feelings told,
All he lamented—and the ready tear
Falls as he listens, soothed, and grieved to hear.

" Did he not curse me, child?"—" He never cursed,
" But could not breathe, and said his heart would burst:"
" And so will mine:"—" Then, father, you must pray;
" My uncle said it took his pains away."

Repeating thus his sorrows, Isaac shows
That he, repenting, feels the debt he owes,
And from this source alone his every comfort flows.
He takes no joy in office, honours, gain;
They make him humble, nay, they give him pain;

" These from my heart," he cries, " all feeling drove;
" They made me cold to nature, dead to love: "
He takes no joy in home, but sighing, sees
A son in sorrow, and a wife at ease;
He takes no joy in office — see him now,
And Burgess Steel has but a passing bow;
Of one sad train of gloomy thoughts possess'd,
He takes no joy in friends, in food, in rest —
Dark are the evil days, and void of peace the best.
And thus he lives, if living be to sigh,
And from all comforts of the world to fly,
Without a hope in life — without a wish to die.(1).

(1) [The characters in this tale, though humble, are admirably drawn, and the baser of them, we fear, the most strikingly natural. An open-hearted generous sailor had a poor, sneaking, cunning, selfish brother, to whom he remitted all his prize-money, and gave all the arrears of his pay — receiving, in return, vehement professions of gratitude, and false protestations of regard. At last, the sailor is disabled in action, and discharged, just as his heartless brother has secured a small office by sycophancy, and made a prudent marriage with a congenial temper. He seeks the shelter of his brother's house as freely as he would have given it; and does not at first perceive the coldness of his reception. But mortifications grow upon him day by day. His grog is expensive, and his pipe makes the wife sick; then his voice is so loud, and his manners so rough, that her friends cannot visit her if he appears at table; so he is banished by degrees to a garret, where he falls sick, and has no consolation but in the kindness of one of his nephews, a little boy, who administers to his comfort, and listens to his stories with a delighted attention. This too, however, is interdicted by his hard-hearted parents; and the boy is obliged to steal privately to his disconsolate uncle. One day his father catches him at his door; and, after beating him back, proceeds to deliver a severe rebuke to his brother for encouraging the child in disobedience, when he finds the unconscious culprit released by death from his despicable insults and reproaches. The great art of the story consists in the plausible excuses with which the ungrateful brother always contrives to cover his wickedness. After the catastrophe, he endures deserved remorse and anguish. — JEFFREY.]

TALE XXI.

THE LEARNED BOY.

——— Like one well studied in a sad ostent,
To please his grandam. — *Merchant of Venice.*

And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail,
Unwillingly to school. — *As You Like It.*

——— He is a better scholar than I thought he was ———
He has a good sprag memory. — *Merry Wives of Windsor*

——— One that feeds
On objects, arts, and imitations,
Which out of use, and staled by other men,
Begin his fashion. — *Julius Cæsar.*

Oh! torture me no more — I will confess. — 2 *Henry VI.*

TALE XXI.

THE LEARNED BOY.

An honest man was *Farmer Jones*, and true;
He did by all as all by him should do;
Grave, cautious, careful, fond of gain was he,
Yet famed for rustic hospitality:
Left with his children in a widow'd state,
The quiet man submitted to his fate;
Though prudent matrons waited for his call,
With cool forbearance he avoided all;
Though each profess'd a pure maternal joy,
By kind attention to his feeble boy:
And though a friendly Widow knew no rest,
Whilst neighbour Jones was lonely and distress'd;
Nay, though the maidens spoke in tender tone
Their hearts' concern to see him left alone—
Jones still persisted in that cheerless life,
As if 'twere sin to take a second wife.

Oh! 'tis a precious thing, when wives are dead,
To find such numbers who will serve instead:

And in whatever state a man be thrown,
'Tis that precisely they would wish their own;
Left the departed infants—then their joy
Is to sustain each lovely girl and boy:
Whatever calling his, whatever trade,
To that their chief attention has been paid;
His happy taste in all things they approve,
His friends they honour, and his food they love;
His wish for order, prudence in affairs,
And equal temper, (thank their stars!) are theirs;
In fact, it seem'd to be a thing decreed,
And fix'd as fate, that marriage must succeed;
Yet some, like Jones, with stubborn hearts and hard,
Can hear such claims, and show them no regard.

Soon as our Farmer, like a general, found
By what strong foes he was encompass'd round,—
Engage he dared not, and he could not fly,
But saw his hope in gentle parley lie;
With looks of kindness then, and trembling heart,
He met the foe, and art opposed to art.

Now spoke that foe insidious—gentle tones,
And gentle looks, assumed for Farmer Jones:
"Three girls," the Widow cried, "a lively three
"To govern well—indeed it cannot be."
"Yes," he replied, "it calls for pains and care;
"But I must bear it:"—"Sir, you cannot bear;
"Your son is weak, and asks a mother's eye:"
"That, my kind friend, a father's may supply:"
"Such growing griefs your very soul will tease:"
"To grieve another would not give me ease—

" I have a mother"—" She, poor ancient soul!
" Can she the spirits of the young control?
" Can she thy peace promote, partake thy care,
" Procure thy comforts, and thy sorrows share?
" Age is itself impatient, uncontroll'd:"
" But wives like mothers must at length be old."
" Thou hast shrewd servants—they are evils sore:"
" Yet a shrewd mistress might afflict me more."
" Wilt thou not be a weary, wailing man?"
" Alas! and I must bear it as I can."

Resisted thus, the Widow soon withdrew,
That in his pride the Hero might pursue;
And off his wonted guard, in some retreat,
Find from a foe prepared entire defeat:
But he was prudent; for he knew in flight
These Parthian warriors turn again and fight:(1)
He but at freedom, not at glory aim'd,
And only safety by his caution claim'd.

Thus, when a great and powerful state decrees,
Upon a small one, in its love, to seize—
It vows in kindness to protect, defend,
And be the fond ally, the faithful friend;
It therefore wills that humbler state to place
Its hopes of safety in a fond embrace;
Then must that humbler state its wisdom prove,
By kind rejection of such pressing love;
Must dread such dangerous friendship to commence,
And stand collected in its own defence:—

(1) The Parthians were so skilled in the art of the bow, that they could shoot with effect flying.

Our Farmer thus the proffer'd kindness fled,
And shunn'd the love that into bondage led.

The Widow failing, fresh besiegers came,
To share the fate of this retiring dame:
And each foresaw a thousand ills attend
The man, that fled from so discreet a friend;
And pray'd, kind soul! that no event might make
The harden'd heart of Farmer Jones to ache.

But he still govern'd with resistless hand,
And where he could not guide he would command:
With steady view in course direct he steer'd,
And his fair daughters loved him, though they fear'd;
Each had her school, and as his wealth was known,
Each had in time a household of her own.

The Boy indeed was at the Grandam's side,
Humour'd and train'd, her trouble and her pride:
Companions dear, with speech and spirits mild,
The childish widow and the vapourish child;
This nature prompts; minds uninform'd and weak
In such alliance ease and comfort seek;
Push'd by the levity of youth aside,
The cares of man, his humour, or his pride,
They feel, in their defenceless state, allied:
The child is pleased to meet regard from age,
The old are pleased ev'n children to engage;
And all their wisdom, scorn'd by proud mankind,
They love to pour into the ductile mind;
By its own weakness into error led,
And by fond age with prejudices fed.

The Father, thankful for the good he had,
Yet saw with pain a whining, timid Lad;
Whom he instructing led through cultured fields,
To show what Man performs, what Nature yields:
But Stephen, listless, wander'd from the view,
From beasts he fled, for butterflies he flew,
And idly gazed about, in search of something new.
The lambs indeed he loved, and wish'd to play
With things so mild, so harmless, and so gay;
Best pleased the weakest of the flock to see,
With whom he felt a sickly sympathy.

Meantime the Dame was anxious, day and night,
To guide the notions of her babe aright,
And on the favourite mind to throw her glimmering light;
Her Bible-stories she impress'd betimes,
And fill'd his head with hymns and holy rhymes;
On powers unseen, the good and ill, she dwelt,
And the poor Boy mysterious terrors felt;
From frightful dreams, he waking sobb'd in dread,
Till the good lady came to guard his bed.

The Father wish'd such errors to correct,
But let them pass in duty and respect:
But more it grieved his worthy mind to see
That *Stephen* never would a farmer be;
In vain he tried the shiftless Lad to guide,
And yet 't was time that something should be tried:
He at the village-school perchance might gain
All that such mind could gather and retain;

Yet the good Dame affirm'd her favourite child
Was apt and studious, though sedate and mild;
" That he on many a learned point could speak,
" And that his body, not his mind, was weak.

The Father doubted — but to school was sent
The timid Stephen, weeping as he went:
There the rude lads compell'd the child to fight,
And sent him bleeding to his home at night;
At this the Grandam more indulgent grew,
And bade her Darling " shun the beastly crew;
" Whom Satan ruled, and who were sure to lie,
" Howling in torments, when they came to die:"
This was such comfort, that in high disdain
He told their fate, and felt their blows again:
Yet if the Boy had not a hero's heart,
Within the school he play'd a better part;
He wrote a clean fine hand, and at his slate,
With more success than many a hero, sate;
He thought not much indeed — but what depends
On pains and care, was at his fingers' ends.

This had his Father's praise, who now espied
A spark of merit, with a blaze of pride:
And though a farmer he would never make,
He might a pen with some advantage take;
And as a clerk that instrument employ,
So well adapted to a timid boy.

A London Cousin soon a place obtain'd,
Easy but humble — little could be gain'd:

The time arrived when youth and age must part,
Tears in each eye, and sorrow in each heart;
The careful Father bade his Son attend
To all his duties and obey his Friend;
To keep his church and there behave aright,
As one existing in his Maker's sight,
Till acts to habits led, and duty to delight:
" Then try, my boy, as quickly as you can,
" T' assume the looks and spirit of a man;
" I say, be honest, faithful, civil, true,
" And this you may, and yet have courage too:
" Heroic men, their country's boast and pride,
" Have fear'd their God, and nothing fear'd beside;
" While others daring, yet imbecile, fly
" The power of man, and that of God defy:
" Be manly, then, though mild, for, sure as fate,
" Thou art, my Stephen, too effeminate;
" Here, take my purse, and make a worthy use
" ('T is fairly stock'd) of what it will produce:
" And now my blessing, not as any charm
" Or conjuration; but 't will do no harm."

Stephen, whose thoughts were wandering up and down,
Now charm'd with promised sights in London-town,
Now loth to leave his Grandam — lost the force,
The drift and tenor of this grave discourse;
But, in a general way, he understood
'T was good advice, and meant, "My son, be good;"
And Stephen knew that all such precepts mean,
That lads should read their Bible, and be clean.

The good old Lady, though in some distress,
Begg'd her dear Stephen would his grief suppress;
" Nay, dry those eyes, my child — and, first of all,
" Hold fast thy faith, whatever may befall:
" Hear the best preacher, and preserve the text
" For meditation, till you hear the next;
" Within your Bible night and morning look—
" There is your duty, read no other book;
" Be not in crowds, in broils, in riots seen,
" And keep your conscience and your linen clean:
" Be you a Joseph, and the time may be,
" When kings and rulers will be ruled by thee."

" Nay," said the Father——" Hush, my son," replied
The Dame——" The Scriptures must not be denied."

The Lad, still weeping, heard the wheels approach,
And took his place within the evening coach,
With heart quite rent asunder: on one side
Was love, and grief, and fear, for scenes untried;
Wild-beasts and wax-work fill'd the happier part
Of Stephen's varying and divided heart:
This he betray'd by sighs and questions strange,
Of famous shows, the Tow'r, and the Exchange.

Soon at his desk was placed the curious Boy,
Demure and silent at his new employ:
Yet as he could, he much attention paid
To all around him, cautious and afraid;
On older Clerks his eager eyes were fix'd,
But Stephen never in their council mix'd:

Much their contempt he fear'd, for if like them,
He felt assured he should himself contemn;
" Oh! they were all so eloquent, so free,
" No! he was nothing—nothing could he be:
" They dress so smartly, and so boldly look,
" And talk as if they read it from a book;
" But I," said Stephen, " will forbear to speak,
" And they will think me prudent and not weak.
" They talk, the instant they have dropp'd the pen,
" Of singing-women and of acting-men;
" Of plays and places where at night they walk
" Beneath the lamps, and with the ladies talk;
" While other ladies for their pleasure sing,
" Oh! 't is a glorious and a happy thing:
" They would despise me, did they understand
" I dare not look upon a scene so grand;
" Or see the plays when critics rise and roar,
" And hiss and groan, and cry—Encore! encore!—
" There 's one among them looks a little kind;
" If more encouraged, I would ope my mind."

Alas! poor Stephen, happier had he kept
His purpose secret, while his envy slept;
Virtue, perhaps, had conquer'd, or his shame
At least preserved him simple as he came.
A year elapsed before this Clerk began
To treat the rustic something like a man;
He then in trifling points the youth advised,
Talk'd of his coat, and had it modernised;
Or with the lad a Sunday-walk would take,
And kindly strive his passions to awake;

Meanwhile explaining all they heard and saw,
Till Stephen stood in wonderment and awe:
To a neat garden near the town they stray'd,
Where the Lad felt delighted and afraid;
There all he saw was smart, and fine, and fair—
He could but marvel how he ventured there:
Soon he observed, with terror and alarm,
His friend enlock'd within a lady's arm,
And freely talking—"But it is," said he,
"A near relation, and that makes him free;"
And much amazed was Stephen, when he knew
This was the first and only interview:
Nay, had that lovely arm by him been seized,
The lovely owner had been highly pleased:
"Alas!" he sigh'd, "I never can contrive,
"At such bold, blessed freedoms to arrive;
"Never shall I such happy courage boast,
"I dare as soon encounter with a ghost."

Now to a play the friendly couple went,
But the Boy murmur'd at the money spent;
"He loved," he said, "to buy, but not to spend—
"They only talk awhile, and there 's an end."

"Come, you shall purchase books," the Friend replied;
"You are bewilder'd, and you want a guide;
"To me refer the choice, and you shall find
"The light break in upon your stagnant mind!

The cooler Clerks exclaim'd, "In vain your art
"To improve a cub without a head or heart;

" Rustics though coarse, and savages though wild,
" Our cares may render liberal and mild;
" But what, my friend, can flow from all these pains?
" There is no dealing with a lack of brains." —

" True I am hopeless to behold him man,
" But let me make the booby what I can:
" Though the rude stone no polish will display,
" Yet you may strip the rugged coat away."

Stephen beheld his books — " I love to know
" How money goes — now here is that to show:
" And now," he cried, " I shall be pleased to get
" Beyond the Bible — there I puzzle yet."

He spoke abash'd — " Nay, nay!" the friend replied,
" You need not lay the good old book aside;
" Antique and curious, I myself indeed
" Read it at times, but as a man should read;
" A fine old work it is, and I protest
" I hate to hear it treated as a jest;
" The book has wisdom in it, if you look
" Wisely upon it, as another book:
" For superstition (as our priests of sin
" Are pleased to tell us) makes us blind within;
" Of this hereafter — we will now select
" Some works to please you, others to direct:
" Tales and romances shall your fancy feed,
" And reasoners form your morals and your creed."

The books were view'd, the price was fairly paid,
And Stephen read undaunted, undismay'd:
But not till first he paper'd all the row,
And placed in order, to enjoy the show;
Next letter'd all the backs with care and speed,
Set them in ranks, and then began to read.

The love of Order, — I the thing receive
From reverend men, and I in part believe, —
Shows a clear mind and clean, and whoso needs
This love, but seldom in the world succeeds;
And yet with this some other love must be,
Ere I can fully to the fact agree;
Valour and study may by order gain,
By order sovereigns hold more steady reign;
Through all the tribes of nature order runs,
And rules around in systems and in suns:
Still has the love of order found a place,
With all that's low, degrading, mean, and base,
With all that merits scorn, and all that meets disgrace:
In the cold miser, of all change afraid,
In pompous men in public seats obey'd;
In humble placemen, heralds, solemn drones,
Fanciers of flowers, and lads like Stephen Jones;
Order to these is armour and defence,
And love of method serves in lack of sense. (1)

(1) [" Mr. Crabbe continued all through his residence in Suffolk, the botanical and entomological studies, to which he had been so early devoted. This devotion appeared to proceed purely from the love of science and the increase of knowledge: at all events, he never seemed to be captivated with the mere beauty of natural objects, or even to catch any taste for the arrangement of his own specimens. Within the house was a kind of

For rustic youth could I a list produce
Of Stephen's books, how great might be the use;
But evil fate was theirs — survey'd, enjoy'd
Some happy months, and then by force destroy'd:
So will'd the Fates — but these with patience read,
Had vast effect on Stephen's heart and head.

This soon appear'd — within a single week
He oped his lips, and made attempt to speak;
He fail'd indeed — but still his Friend confess'd
The best have fail'd, and he had done his best:
The first of swimmers, when at first he swims,
Has little use or freedom in his limbs;
Nay, when at length he strikes with manly force,
The cramp may seize him, and impede his course.

Encouraged thus, our Clerk again essay'd
The daring act, though daunted and afraid;
Succeeding now, though partial his success,
And pertness mark'd his manner and address,
Yet such improvement issued from his books,
That all discern'd it in his speech and looks:
He ventured then on every theme to speak,
And felt no feverish tingling in his cheek;

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scientific confusion; in the garden, the usual showy foreigners gave place to the most scarce flowers, and especially to the rarer weeds, of Britain; and these were scattered here and there only for preservation. In fact, he neither loved order for its own sake, nor had any very high opinion of that passion in others: witness his words, in the tale of Stephen Jones, the 'Learned Boy,'—

'The love of order — I the thing receive,' &c.

Whatever truth there may be in these lines, it is certain that this insensibility to the beauty of order was a defect in his own mind; arising from what I must call his want of taste."—*Life, antè*, vol. i. p. 164.]

His friend approving, hail'd the happy change,
The Clerks exclaim'd — "'T is famous, and 't is strange."

Two years had pass'd; the Youth attended still,
(Though thus accomplish'd) with a ready quill;
He sat th' allotted hours, though hard the case,
While timid prudence ruled in virtue's place;
By promise bound, the Son his letters penn'd
To his good parent, at the quarter's end.
At first he sent those lines, the state to tell
Of his own health, and hoped his friends were well;
He kept their virtuous precepts in his mind,
And needed nothing — then his name was sign'd:
But now he wrote of Sunday-walks and views,
Of actors' names, choice novels, and strange news;
How coats were cut, and of his urgent need
For fresh supply, which he desired with speed.
The Father doubted, when these letters came,
To what they tended, yet was loth to blame:
"Stephen was once *my duteous son*, and now
"*My most obedient* — this can I allow?
"Can I with pleasure or with patience see
"A boy at once so heartless, and so free?"

But soon the kinsman heavy tidings told,
That love and prudence could no more withhold:
"Stephen, though steady at his desk, was grown
"A rake and coxcomb — this he grieved to own;
"His cousin left his church, and spent the day
"Lounging about in quite a heathen way;

" Sometimes he swore, but had indeed the grace
" To show the shame imprinted on his face:
" I search'd his room, and in his absence read
" Books that I knew would turn a stronger head;
" The works of atheists half the number made,
" The rests were lives of harlots leaving trade;
" Which neither man nor boy would deign to read,
" If from the scandal and pollution freed:
" I sometimes threaten'd, and would fairly state
" My sense of things so vile and profligate;
" But I'm a cit, such works are lost on me —
" They're knowledge, and (good Lord!) philosophy."

" Oh, send him down," the Father soon replied;
" Let me behold him, and my skill be tried:
" If care and kindness lose their wonted use,
" Some rougher medicine will the end produce."

Stephen with grief and anger heard his doom —
" Go to the farmer? to the rustic's home?
" Curse the base threat'ning —" " Nay, child, never curse;
" Corrupted long your case is growing worse."—
" I!" quoth the youth, " I challenge all mankind
" To find a fault; what fault have you to find?
" Improve I not in manner, speech, and grace?
" Inquire — my friends will tell it to your face;
" Have I been taught to guard his kine and sheep?
" A man like me has other things to keep;
" This let him know."—" It would his wrath excite:
" But come, prepare, you must away to-night."

" What! leave my studies, my improvements leave,
" My faithful friends and intimates to grieve!" —
" Go to your father, Stephen, let him see
" All these improvements; they are lost on me."

The Youth, though loth, obey'd, and soon he saw
The Farmer-father, with some signs of awe;
Who kind, yet silent, waited to behold
How one would act, so daring, yet so cold:
And soon he found, between the friendly pair
That secrets pass'd which he was not to share;
But he resolved those secrets to obtain,
And quash rebellion in his lawful reign.

Stephen, though vain, was with his father mute;
He fear'd a crisis, and he shunn'd dispute;
And yet he long'd with youthful pride to show
He knew such things as farmers could not know;
These to the Grandam he with freedom spoke,
Saw her amazement, and enjoy'd the joke:
But on the father when he cast his eye,
Something he found that made his valour shy;
And thus there seem'd to be a hollow truce,
Still threatning something dismal to produce.

'Ere this the Father at his leisure read
The son's choice volumes, and his wonder fled;
He saw how wrought the works of either kind
On so presuming, yet so weak a mind;
These in a chosen hour he made his prey,
Condemn'd, and bore with vengeful thoughts away;

Then in a close recess the couple near,
He sat unseen to see, unheard to hear.

There soon a trial for his patience came;
Beneath were placed the Youth and ancient Dame,
Each on a purpose fix'd — but neither thought
How near a foe, with power and vengeance fraught.

And now the matron told, as tidings sad,
What she had heard of her beloved lad;
How he to graceless, wicked men gave heed,
And wicked books would night and morning read;
Some former lectures she again began,
And begg'd attention of her little man;
She brought, with many a pious boast, in view
His former studies, and condemn'd the new:
Once he the names of saints and patriarchs old,
Judges and kings, and chiefs and prophets, told;
Then he in winter-nights the Bible took,
To count how often in the sacred book
The sacred name appear'd, and could rehearse
Which were the middle chapter, word, and verse,
The very letter in the middle placed,
And so employ'd the hours that others waste.

"Such wert thou once; and now, my child, they say
"Thy faith like water runneth fast away;
"The prince of devils hath, I fear, beguiled
"The ready wit of my backsliding child."

On this, with lofty looks, our Clerk began
His grave rebuke, as he assumed the man —

" There is no devil," said the hopeful youth,
" Nor prince of devils; that I know for truth:
" Have I not told you how my books describe
" The arts of priests, and all the canting tribe?
" Your Bible mentions Egypt, where it seems
" Was Joseph found when Pharaoh dream'd his dreams:
" Now in that place, in some bewilder'd head,
" (The learned write) religious dreams were bred;
" Whence through the earth, with various forms combined,
" They came to frighten and afflict mankind,
" Prone (so I read) to let a priest invade
" Their souls with awe, and by his craft be made
" Slave to his will, and profit to his trade:
" So say my books, and how the rogues agreed
" To blind the victims, to defraud and lead;
" When joys above to ready dupes were sold,
" And hell was threaten'd to the shy and cold.

" Why so amazed, and so prepared to pray?
" As if a Being heard a word we say:
" This may surprise you; I myself began
" To feel disturb'd, and to my Bible ran;
" I now am wiser—yet agree in this,
" The book has things that are not much amiss;
" It is a fine old work, and I protest
" I hate to hear it treated as a jest:
" The book has wisdom in it, if you look
" Wisely upon it as another book."—

" Oh! wicked! wicked! my unhappy child!
" How hast thou been by evil men beguiled!"

" How! wicked, say you? you can little guess
" The gain of that which you call wickedness:
" Why, sins you think it sinful but to name
" Have gain'd both wives and widows wealth and fame;
" And this because such people never dread
" Those threaten'd pains; hell comes not in their head:
" Love is our nature, wealth we all desire,
" And what we wish 'tis lawful to acquire;
" So say my books—and what beside they show
" 'Tis time to let this honest farmer know.
" Nay, look not grave; am I commanded down
" To feed his cattle and become his clown?
" Is such his purpose? then he shall be told
" The vulgar insult——
——" Hold, in mercy hold—
" Father, oh! father! throw the whip away;
" I was but jesting, on my knees I pray—
" There, hold his arm—oh! leave us not alone:
" In pity cease, and I will yet atone
" For all my sin——" In vain; stroke after stroke,
On side and shoulder, quick as mill-wheels broke;
Quick as the patient's pulse, who trembling cried,
And still the parent with a stroke replied;
Till all the medicine he prepared was dealt,
And every bone the precious influence felt;
Till all the panting flesh was red and raw,
And every thought was turn'd to fear and awe;

Till every doubt to due respect gave place —
Such cures are done when doctors know the case.

" Oh! I shall die — my father! do receive
" My dying words; indeed I do believe;
" The books are lying books, I know it well,
" There is a devil, oh! there is a hell;
" And I'm a sinner: spare me, I am young,
" My sinful words were only on my tongue;
" My heart consented not; 't is all a lie:
" Oh! spare me then, I'm not prepared to die."

" Vain, worthless, stupid wretch!" the Father cried,
" Dost thou presume to teach? art thou a guide?
" Driveller and dog, it gave the mind distress
" To hear thy thoughts in their religious dress;
" Thy pious folly moved my strong disdain,
" Yet I forgave thee for thy want of brain:
" But Job in patience must the man exceed
" Who could endure thee in thy present creed;
" Is it for thee, thou idiot, to pretend
" The wicked cause a helping hand to lend?
" Canst thou a judge in any question be?
" Atheists themselves would scorn a friend like thee. —

" Lo! yonder blaze thy worthies; in one heap
" Thy scoundrel-favourites must for ever sleep:
" Each yields its poison to the flame in turn,
" Where whores and infidels are doom'd to burn;

" Two noble faggots made the flame you see,
" Reserving only two fair twigs for thee;
" That in thy view the instruments may stand,
" And be in future ready for my hand:
" The just mementos that, though silent, show
" Whence thy correction and improvements flow;
" Beholding these, thou wilt confess their power,
" And feel the shame of this important hour.

" Hadst thou been humble, I had first design'd
" By care from folly to have freed thy mind;
" And when a clean foundation had been laid,
" Our priest, more able, would have lent his aid:
" But thou art weak, and force must folly guide,
" And thou art vain, and pain must humble pride:
" Teachers men honour, learners they allure;
" But learners teaching, of contempt are sure;
" Scorn is their certain meed, and smart their only cure!"

END OF THE TALES. (1)

(1) [The elegant and judicious critic of these Tales in the *Edinburgh Review* for 1812, thus concludes his article:—" The last tale is the history of a poor, weakly, paltry lad, who is sent up from the country to be a clerk in town; and learns by slow degrees to affect freethinking, and to practise dissipation. Upon the tidings of which happy conversion, his father, a worthy old farmer, orders him down again to the country, where he harrows up the soul of his pious grandmother by his infidel prating—and his father reforms him at once by burning his idol book, and treating him with a vigorous course of horsewhipping. There is some humour in this

tale; and a great deal of nature and art, especially in the delineation of this slender clerk's gradual corruption, and in the constant and constitutional predominance of weakness and folly in all his vice and virtue, his piety and profaneness.

"We have thus gone through these tales with minuteness. Considering Mr. Crabbe as, upon the whole, the most original writer that has ever come before us; and being at the same time of opinion, that his writings are destined to a still more extensive popularity than they have yet obtained, we could not resist the temptation of contributing our little aid to the fulfilment of that destiny. It is chiefly for the same reason that we have directed our remarks rather to the *moral* than the literary qualities of his works; — to his genius at least, rather than his taste — and to his thoughts rather than his figures of speech. By far the most remarkable thing in his writings, is the prodigious mass of original observations and reflections they everywhere exhibit; and that extraordinary power of conceiving and representing an imaginary object, whether physical or intellectual, with such a rich and complete accompaniment of circumstances and details, as few ordinary observers either perceive or remember in realities; — a power which must for ever entitle him to the very first rank among descriptive poets; and, when directed to worthy objects, to a rank inferior to none in the highest departments of poetry.

"We think that many of Mr. Crabbe's stories may be ranked by the side of the inimitable tales of Miss Edgeworth, and are calculated to do nearly as much good among that part of the population with which they are principally occupied. But it is not only on account of the *moral* benefit which we think they may derive from them, that we would peculiarly recommend the writings of Mr. Crabbe, to that great proportion of our readers which must necessarily belong to the middling or humbler classes of the community. We are persuaded that they will derive more pleasure from them than readers of any other description. Those who do not belong to that rank of society with which this powerful writer is chiefly conversant in his poetry, or who have not at least gone much among them, and attended diligently to their characters and occupations, can neither be half aware of the exquisite fidelity of his delineations, nor feel in their full force the better part of the emotions which he has suggested. Vehement passion, indeed, is of all ranks and conditions; and its language and external indications nearly the same in all. Like highly rectified spirit, it blazes and inflames with equal force and brightness from whatever materials it is extracted. But all the softer and kindlier affections, all the social anxieties that mix with our daily hopes, and endear our home, and colour our existence, wear a different livery, and are written in a different character, in almost every great *caste* or division of society; and the heart is warmed, and the spirit is touched by their delineation, exactly in the same proportion in which we are familiar with the types by which they are represented. — When Burns, in his better days, walked out on a fine summer morning with Dugald Stewart, and the latter observed to him what a beauty the scattered cottages, with their white walls and curling smoke shining in the silent sun, imparted to the landscape, the peasant-poet observed, that *he* felt that beauty ten times more strongly than his companion; and that

it was necessary to be a cottager to know what pure and tranquil pleasures nestled below those lowly roofs, or to read, in their external appearance, the signs of so many heartfelt and long-remembered enjoyments. In the same way, the humble and patient hopes—the depressing embarrassments, the little mortifications, the slender triumphs, and strange temptations which occur in middling life, and are the theme of Mr. Crabbe's finest and most touching representations, can only be guessed at by those who glitter in the higher walks of existence; while they must raise a tumultuous throb and many a fond recollection in the breasts of those to whom they reflect so truly the image of their own estate, and reveal so clearly the secrets of their habitual sensations.

"We cannot help thinking, therefore, that, though such writings as are now before us must give pleasure to all persons of taste and sensibility, they will give by far the greatest pleasure to those whose condition is least remote from that of the beings with whom they are occupied. But we think, also, that it was wise and meritorious in Mr. Crabbe to occupy himself with such beings. In this country, there probably are not less than *two hundred thousand* persons who read for amusement or instruction among *the middling classes* of society. In the higher classes, there are not as many as *twenty thousand*. It is easy to see, therefore, which a poet should choose to please for his own glory and emolument, and which he should wish to delight and amend out of mere philanthropy. The fact, too, we believe, is, that a great part of the larger body are to the full as well educated and as high-minded as the smaller; and, though their taste may not be so correct and fastidious, we are persuaded that their sensibility is greater."

It may be proper to observe, by the way, that, in another part of the same paper, the writer (probably Mr. Jeffrey) explains the sense he attaches to a vague phrase in the last of these interesting paragraphs. He says:—"By *the middling classes*, we mean almost all those who are below the sphere of what is called fashionable or public life, and who do not aim at distinction or notoriety beyond the circle of their equals in fortune and situation."]

FLIRTATION,

A DIALOGUE.

[WRITTEN IN MAY, 1816, AND NOW FIRST PUBLISHED.]

FLIRTATION,

A DIALOGUE.

From her own room, in summer's softest eve,
Stept *Celia* forth her *Delia* to receive, —
Joy in her looks, that half her tale declared:

C. — War and the waves my fav'rite Youth have
spared;
Faithful and fond, through many a painful year,
My Charles will come——Do give me joy, my dear.

D. — I give you joy, and so may he; but still,
'Tis right to question, if 't is sure he will;
A sailor's open honest heart we prize,
But honest sailors have their ears and eyes.

C. — Oh! but he surely will on me depend,
Nor dare to doubt the firmness of his friend.

D. — Be not secure; the very best have foes,
And facts they would not to the world expose;
And these he may be told, if he converse with those.

C.—Speak you in friendship?—let it be sincere
And naked truth,—and what have I to fear?

D.—I speak in friendship; and I do confess
If I were you, the Truth should wear a dress:
If Charles should doubt, as lovers do, though blind,
Would you to him present the naked mind?
If it were clear as crystal, yet it checks
One's joy to think that he may fancy specks;
And now, in five long years, we scarcely know
How the mind gets them, and how large they grow.
Let woman be as rigid as a nun,
She cannot censures and surmises shun.
Wonder not, then, at tales that Scandal tells—
Your father's rooms were not like sisters' cells;
Nor pious monks came there, nor prosing friars,
But well-dress'd captains, and approving squires.

C.—What these to me, admit th' account be true?

D.—Nay, that yourself describe—they came to you!

C.—Well! to my friend I may the truth confess,
Poor Captain Glimmer loved me to excess;
Flintham, the young solicitor, that wrote
Those pretty verses, he began to dote;
That Youth from Oxford, when I used to stop
A moment with him, at my feet would drop;
Nor less your Brother, whom, for your dear sake,
I to my favour often used to take:
And was, vile world! my character at stake?

If such reports my Sailor's ear should reach,
What jealous thoughts and fancies may they teach.
If without cause ill-judging men suspect,
What may not all these harmless Truths effect?
And what, my Delia, if our virtues fail,
What must we fear if conscious we are frail;
And well you know, my friend, nor fear t' impart,
The tender frailties of the yielding heart.

D.—Speak for yourself, fair lady! speak with care;
I, not your frailties, but your suffering share.
You may my counsel, if you will, refuse;
But pray beware, how you my name accuse.

C.—Accuse you! No! there is no need of One,
To do what long the public voice has done.
What misses then at school, forget the fall
Of Ensign Bloomer, when he leapt the wall?
That was a first exploit, and we were witness all;
And that sad night, upon my faithful breast,
We wept together, till we sank to rest;
You own'd your love ——

D.—A girl, a chit, a child!
Am I for this, and by a friend reviled?

C.—Then lay your hand, fair creature! on your heart,
And say how many there have had a part:
Six I remember; and if Fame be true,
The handsome Serjeant had his portion too.

D.—A Serjeant! Madam, if I might advise,
Do use some small discretion in such lies:
A Serjeant, Celia?——

C.—Handsome, smart, and clean.
Yes! and the fellow had a noble mien,
That might excuse you had you giv'n your hand,—
But this your father could not understand.

D.—Mercy! how pert and flippant are you grown,
As if you 'd not a secret of your own;
Yet would you tremble should your Sailor know,
What I, or my small cabinet, could show:
He might suspect a heart with many a wound
Shallow and deep, could never more be sound;
That of one pierced so oft, so largely bled,
The feeling ceases, and the love is dead;
But sense exists, and passion serves instead.

C.—Injurious Delia! cold, reproachful maid!
Is thus my confidential faith repaid?
Is this the counsel that we two have held,
When duty trembled, and desire rebell'd;
The sister-vows we made, through many a night,
To aid each other in the arduous fight
With the harsh-minded powers who never think
What nature needs, nor will at weakness wink:
And now, thou cruel girl! is all forgot,
The wish oft whisper'd, the imagined lot,
The secret Hymen, the sequester'd cot?
And will you thus our bond of friendship rend,
And join the world in censure of your friend?

Oh! 'tis not right! as all with scorn must see,
Although the certain mischief falls on me.

D. — Nay, never weep! but let this kiss restore,
And make our friendship perfect as before;
Do not our wiser selves, ourselves condemn,
And yet we dearly love their faults and them?
So our reproofs to tender minds are shown,
We treat their wanderings as we treat our own;
We are each other's conscience, and we tell
Our friend her fault, because we wish her well;
We judge, nay prejudge, what may be her case,
Fore-arm the soul, and shield her from disgrace.
Creatures in prison, ere the trying day,
Their answers practise, and their powers essay.
By means like these they guard against surprise,
And all the puzzling questions that may rise.

"Guilty or not?" His lawyer thus address'd
A wealthy rogue — "Not guilty, I protest —"
"Why, then, my friend, we've nothing here to say,
"But you're in danger! prithee heed your way:
"*You* know your truth, *I* where your error lies:
"From your '*Not* guilty' will your danger rise."
"Oh! but I *am*, and I have here the gain
"Of wicked craft:" — "Then let it *here* remain;
"For we must guard it by a sure defence,
"And not professions of your innocence;
"For that's the way, whatever you suppose,
"To slip your neck within the ready noose."

Thus, my beloved friend! a girl, if wise,
Upon her Prudence, not her Truth, relies;
It is confess'd, that not the good and pure
Are in this world of calumny secure—
And therefore never let a lass rely
Upon her goodness and her chastity;
Her very virtue makes her heedless: youth
Reveals imprudent, nay injurious, truth;
Whereas, if conscious that she merit blame,
She grows discreet, and well defends her fame;
And thus, offending, better makes her way—
As Joseph Surface argues in the play—
Than when in virtue's strength she proudly stood,
So wrongly right, and so absurdly good.

Now, when your Charles shall be your judge, and try
His own dear damsel—questioning how and why—
Let her be ready, arm'd with prompt reply;
No hesitation let the man discern,
But answer boldly, then accuse in turn;
Some trifling points with candid speech confess'd,
You gain a monstrous credit for the rest.
Then may you wear the Injured Lady frown,
And with your anger keep his malice down;
Accuse, condemn, and make him glad at heart
To sue for pardon when you come to part;
But let him have it; let him go in peace,
And all inquiries of themselves will cease;
To touch him nearer, and to hold him fast,
Have a few tears *in petto* at the last;

But, this with care! for 'tis a point of doubt,
If you should end with weeping or without.
'T is true you much affect him by your pain,
But he may want to prove his power again;
And, then, it spoils the look, and hurts the eyes —
A girl is never handsome when she cries.
Take it for granted, in a general way,
The more you weep for men, the more you may.
Save your resources; for though now you cry
With good effect, you may not by and by.
It is a knack; and there are those that weep
Without emotion that a man may sleep;
Others disgust—'tis genius, not advice,
That will avail us in a thing so nice.
If you should love him, you have greater need
Of all your care, and may not then succeed: —
For that's our bane—we should be conquerors all
With hearts untouch'd—our feelings cause our fall.
But your experience aids you: you can hide
Your real weakness in your borrow'd pride.

But to the point—should so the Charge be laid,
That nought against it fairly can be said—
How would you act? You would not then confess?—

C.—Oh! never! no!—nor even my Truth profess!
To mute contempt I would alone resort
For the Reporters, and for their Report.
If he profess'd forgiveness, I would cry —
" Forgive such faithlessness! so would not I!

" Such errors pardon! he that so would act
" Would, I am sure, be guilty of the fact;
" Charles, if I thought your spirit was so mean,
" I would not longer in your walks be seen:
" Could you such woman for a moment prize?
" You might forgive her, but you must despise."

D.—Bravo, my girl! 'tis then our sex command,
When we can seize the weapon in their hand,
When we their charge so manage, that 'tis found
To save the credit it was meant to wound.
Those who by reasons their acquittal seek,
Make the whole sex contemptible and weak;
This, too, observe—that men of sense in love
Dupes more complete than fools and blockheads prove;
For all that knowledge lent them as a guide,
Goes off entirely to the lady's side;
Whereas the blockhead rather sees the more,
And gains perception that he lack'd before.
His honest passion blinds the man of sense,
While want of feeling is the fool's defence;
Arm'd with insensibility he comes,
When more repell'd he but the more assumes,
And thus succeeds where fails the man of wit;
For, where we cannot conquer we submit.

But come, my love! let us examine now,
These Charges all;—say, what shall we avow,
Admit, deny; and which defend, and how?
That old affair between your friend and you,
When your fond Sailor bade his home adieu,

May be forgotten; yet we should prepare
For all events: and are you guarded there?

C.—Oh! 'tis long since—I might the whole deny—
"So poor, and so contemptible a lie!
"Charles, if 'tis pleasant to abuse your friend,
"Let there be something that she may defend;
"This is too silly—"

D.—Well you may appear
With so much spirit—not a witness near;
Time puzzles judgment, and, when none explain,
You may assume the airs of high disdain;
But for my Brother—night and morn were you
Together found, th' inseparable two,
Far from the haunts of vulgar prying men—
In the old abbey—in the lonely glen—
In the beech-wood—within the quarry made
By hands long dead—within the silent glade,
Where the moon gleams upon the spring that flows
By the grey willows as they stand in rows—
Shall I proceed? there's not a quiet spot
In all the parish where the pair were not,
Oft watch'd, oft seen. You must not so despise
This weighty charge—Now, what will you devise?

C.—"Her brother! What, Sir? jealous of a child!
"A friend's relation! Why, the man is wild—
"A boy not yet at college! Come, this proves
"Some truth in you! This is a freak of Love's:

" I must forgive it, though I know not how
" A thing so very simple to allow.
" Pray, if I meet my cousin's little boy,
" And take a kiss, would that your peace annoy?
" But I remember Delia—yet to give
" A thought to this is folly, as I live—
" But I remember Delia made her prayer
" That I would try and give the Boy an air;
" Yet awkward he, for all the pains we took—
" A bookish boy, his pleasure is his book;
" And since the lad is grown to man's estate,
" We never speak—Your bookish youth I hate."

D.—Right! and he cannot tell, with all his art,
Our father's will compell'd you both to part.

C.—Nay, this is needless—

D.—Oh! when you are tried,
And taught for trial, must I feed your pride?
Oh! that's the vice of which I still complain:
Men could not triumph were not women vain.
But now proceed—say *boyhood* in this case
(The last obscure one) shields you from disgrace.
But what of Shelley? all your foes can prove,
And all your friends, that here indeed was love.
For three long months you met as lovers meet,
And half the town has seen him at your feet;
Then, on the evil day that saw you part,
Your ashy looks betray'd your aching heart.
With this against you——

C.—This, my watchful friend,
Confess I cannot; therefore must defend.

" Shelley! dear Charles, how enter'd he your mind?
" Well may they say that jealousy is blind!
" Of all the men who talk'd with me of love,
" His were the offers I could least approve;
" My father's choice—and, Charles, you must agree
" That my good father seldom thinks with me—
" Or his had been the grief, while thou wert tost at sea!
" It was so odious—when that man was near,
" My father never could himself appear;
" Had I received his fav'rite with a frown,
" Upon my word he would have knock'd me down."

D.—Well! grant you durst not frown—but people say
That you were dying when he went away:—
Yes! you were ill! of that no doubts remain;
And how explain it?—

C.—Oh! I'll soon explain:—

" I sicken'd, say you, when the man was gone—
" Could I be well, if sickness would come on?
" Fact follows fact: but is't of Nature's laws
" That one of course must be the other's cause?
" Just as her husband tried his fav'rite gun,
" My cousin brought him forth his first-born son—
" The birth might either flash or fright succeed,
" But neither, sure, were causes of the deed.

" That Shelley left us, it is very true—
" That sickness found me, I confess it too;
" But that the one was cause, and one effect,
" Is a conceit I utterly reject.
" You may, my Friend, demonstrate, if you please,
" That disappointment will bring on disease;
" But, if it should, I would be glad to know
" If 'tis a quinsy that such griefs bestow?
" A heart may suffer, if a lady doat;
" But will she feel her anguish in the throat?
" I've heard of pangs that tender folks endure,
" But not that linctuses and blisters cure."

Your thoughts, my Delia!—

D.—What I think of this?
Why! if he smile, it is not much amiss;
But there are humours; and, by them possess'd,
A lover will not hearken to a jest.

Well, let this pass!—but, for the next affair,
We know your father was indignant there;
He hated Miller. Say! if Charles should press
For explanation, what would you confess?
You cannot there on his commands presume;
Besides, you fainted in a public room;
There own'd your flame, and, like heroic maid,
The sovereign impulse of your will obey'd.
What, to your thinking, was the world's disdain?
You could retort its insolence again:
Your boundless passion boldly you avow'd,
And spoke the purpose of your soul aloud;

Associates, servants, friends, alike can prove
The world-defying force of Celia's love.
Did she not wish, nay vow, to poison her
Whom, some durst whisper, Damon could prefer?
And then that frantic quarrel at the ball—
It must be known, and he will hear it all.
Nay! never frown, but cast about, in time,
How best to answer what he thinks a crime:
For what he thinks might have but little weight,
If you could answer—

C.—Then I'll answer straight—
Not without Truth; for who would vainly tell
A wretched lie, when Truth might serve as well?
Had I not fever? is not that the bane
Of human wisdom? was I not insane?

"Oh! Charles, no more! would you recall the day
"When it pleased Fate to take my wits away?
"How can I answer for a thousand things
"That this disorder to the sufferer brings?
"Is it not known, the men whom you dislike
"Are those who now the erring fancy strike?
"Nor would it much surprise me, if 'twere true,
"That in those days of dread I slighted you:
"When the poor mind, illumined by no spark
"Of reason's light, was wandering in the dark,
"You must not wonder, if the vilest train
"Of evil thoughts were printed on the brain;
"Nor if the loyal and the faithful prove
"False to their king, and faithless to their love."
Your thoughts on this?

D.—With some you may succeed
By such bold strokes; but they must love indeed.

C.—Doubt you his passion?—

D.—But, in five long years
The passion settles—then the reason clears:
Turbid is love, and to ferment inclined,
But by and by grows sober and refined,
And peers for facts; but if one can't rely
On truth, one takes one's chance—you can but try.

Yet once again I must attention ask
To a new Charge, and then resign my task.
I would not hurt you; but confess at least
That you were partial to that handsome Priest;
Say what they will of his religious mind,
He was warm-hearted, and to ladies kind:
Now, with his reverence you were daily seen,
When it was winter and the weather keen,
Traced to the mountains when the winds were strong,
And roughly bore you, arm in arm, along—
That wintry wind, inspired by love or zeal,
You were too faithful or too fond to feel.
Shielded from inward and from outward harm
By the strong spirit, and the fleshly arm—
The winter-garden you could both admire,
And leave his sisters at the parlour fire;
You trusted not your speech these dames among—
Better the teeth should chatter, than the tongue!

Did not your father stop the pure delight,
Of this perambulating Love at night?
It is reported, that his craft contrived
To get the Priest with expedition wived,
And sent away; for fathers will suspect
Her inward worth, whose ways are incorrect —
Patience, my dear! your Lover *will* appear;
At this new tale, then, what will be your cheer?
" I hear," says he, — and he will look as grim
As if he heard his lass accusing him —
" I hear, my Celia, your alluring looks
" Kept the young Curate from his holy books:
" Parsons, we know, advise their flocks to pray;
" But 't is their duty — not the better they;
" 'T is done for policy, for praise, for pay:
" Or let the very best be understood,
" They 're men, you know, and men are flesh and blood:
" Now, they do say — but let me not offend —
" You were too often with this pious friend,
" And spent your time ——"

C. — " As people ought to spend.
" And, sir, if you of some divine would ask
" Aid in your doubts, it were a happy task;
" But you, alas! the while, are not perplex'd
" By the dark meaning of a threat'ning text;
" You rather censure her who spends her time
" In search of Truth, as if it were a crime!
" Could I your dread of vulgar scandal feel,
" To whom should I, in my distress, appeal?

" A time there may be, Charles, indeed there must,
" When you will need a faithful Priest to trust,
" In conscience tender, but in counsel just.
" Charles, for my Fame I would in prudence strive,
" And, if I could, would keep your Love alive;
" But there are things that our attention claim,
" More near than Love, and more desired than Fame!"

D.—" But why in secret?" he will ask you—

C.—" Why?
" Oh! Charles, could you the doubting spirit spy,
" Had you such fears, all hearers you would shun;
" What one confesses should be heard by one.
" Your mind is gross, and you have dwelt so long
" With such companions, that you will be wrong:
" We fill our minds from those with whom we live,
" And as your fears are Nature's, I forgive;
" But learn your peace and my good name to prize,
" And fears of fancy let us both despise."

D.—Enough, my friend! Now let the man advance—
You are prepared, and nothing leave to chance:
'T is not sufficient that we 're pure and just;
The wise to nothing but their wisdom trust—

Will he himself appear, or will he send,
Duteous as warm! and not alarm my friend?

We need not ask—behold! his servant comes:
His father's livery! no fond heart presumes:
Thus he prepares you—kindly gives you space
To arm your mind, and rectify your face.
Now, read your Letter—while my faithful heart
Feels all that his can dictate or impart.

Nay! bless you, love! what melancholy tale
Conveys that paper? Why so deadly pale?
It is his sister's writing, but the seal
Is red: he lives. What is it that you feel?

C.—O! my dear friend! let us from man retreat,
Or never trust him if we chance to meet—
The fickle wretch! that from our presence flies
To any flirt that any place supplies,
And laughs at vows!—but see the Letter!—here—
"*Married at Guernsey!!!*"—Oh! the Villain, dear!

OCCASIONAL PIECES.

[NOW FIRST PUBLISHED.]

LINES IN LAURA'S ALBUM.

[These lines were written at the desire of a young lady, who requested some verses on a cameo in her possession.]

See with what ease the child-like god
Assumes his reins, and shakes his rod;
How gaily, like a smiling boy,
He seems his triumphs to enjoy,
And looks as innocently mild
As if he were indeed a child!
But in that meekness who shall tell,
What vengeance sleeps, what terrors dwell?

By him are tamed the fierce;—the bold
And haughty are by him controll'd;
The hero of th' ensanguined field
Finds there is neither sword nor shield
Availing here. Amid his books
The student thinks how Laura looks;
The miser's self, with heart of lead,
With all the nobler feelings fled,
Has thrown his darling treasures by,
And sigh'd for something worth a sigh.

Love over gentle natures reigns
A gentle master; yet his pains
Are felt by them, are felt by all,
The bitter sweet, the honied gall,

Soft pleasing tears, heart-soothing sighs,
Sweet pain, and joys that agonise.
Against a power like this, what arts,
What virtues, can secure our hearts?
In vain are both — The good, the wise,
Have tender thoughts and wandering eyes:
And then, to banish Virtue's fear,
Like Virtue's self will Love appear;
Bid every anxious feeling cease,
And all be confidence and peace.

He such insidious method takes,
He seems to heal the wound he makes,
Till, master of the human breast,
He shows himself the foe of rest,
Pours in his doubts, his dread, his pains,
And now a very tyrant reigns.

If, then, his power we cannot shun,
And must endure — what can be done?
To whom, thus bound, can we apply? —
To Prudence, as our best ally:
For she, like Pallas, for the fight
Can arm our eye with clearer sight;
Can teach the happy art that gains
A captive who will grace our chains;
And, as we must the dart endure,
To bear the wound we cannot cure.

LINES WRITTEN AT WARWICK.

" You that in warlike stories take delight," &c.

HAIL! centre-county of our land, and known
For matchless worth and valour all thine own —
Warwick! renown'd for him who best could write,
Shakspeare the Bard, and him so fierce in fight,
Guy, thy brave Earl, who made whole armies fly,
And giants fall — Who has not heard of Guy?

Him sent his Lady, matchless in her charms,
To gain immortal glory by his arms,
Felice the fair, who, as her bard maintain'd,
The prize of beauty over Venus gain'd;
For she, the goddess, had some trivial blot
That marr'd some beauty, which our nymph had not:
But this apart, for in a fav'rite theme
Poets and lovers are allow'd to dream —
Still we believe the lady and her knight
Were matchless both: He in the glorious fight,
She in the bower by day, and festive hall by night.

Urged by his love, th' adventurous Guy proceeds,
And Europe wonders at his warlike deeds;
Whatever prince his potent arm sustains,
However weak, the certain conquest gains;
On every side the routed legions fly,
Numbers are nothing in the sight of Guy:
To him the injured made their sufferings known,
And he relieved all sorrows, but his own:

Ladies who owed their freedom to his might
Were grieved to find his heart another's right:

The brood of giants, famous in those times,
Fell by his arm, and perish'd for their crimes.
Colbrand the strong, who by the Dane was brought,
When he the crown of good Athelstan sought,
Fell by the prowess of our champion brave,
And his huge body found an English grave.

But what to Guy were men, or great or small,
Or one or many? — he despatch'd them all;
A huge dun Cow, the dread of all around,
A master-spirit in our hero found:
'T was desolation all about her den —
Her sport was murder, and her meals were men.
At Dunmore Heath the monster he assail'd,
And o'er the fiercest of his foes prevail'd.

Nor fear'd he lions more than lions fear
Poor trembling shepherds, or the sheep they shear:
A fiery dragon, whether green or red
The story tells not, by his valour bled;
What more I know not, but by these 't is plain
That Guy of Warwick never fought in vain.

When much of life in martial deeds was spent,
His sovereign lady found her heart relent,
And gave her hand. Then, all was joy around,
And valiant Guy with love and glory crown'd;
Then Warwick Castle wide its gate display'd,
And peace and pleasure this their dwelling made.

Alas! not long — a hero knows not rest;
A new sensation fill'd his anxious breast.
His fancy brought before his eyes a train
Of pensive shades, the ghosts of mortals slain;
His dreams presented what his sword had done;
He saw the blood from wounded soldiers run,
And dying men, with every ghastly wound,
Breathed forth their souls upon the sanguine ground.

Alarm'd at this, he dared no longer stay,
But left his bride, and as a pilgrim gray,
With staff and beads, went forth to weep and fast
and pray.
In vain his Felice sigh'd — nay, smiled in vain;
With all he loved he dare not not long remain,
But roved he knew not where, nor said, "I come
again."

The widow'd countess pass'd her years in grief,
But sought in alms and holy deeds relief;
And many a pilgrim ask'd, with many a sigh,
To give her tidings of the wandering Guy.

Perverse and cruel! could it conscience ease,
A wife so lovely and so fond to tease?
Or could he not with her a saint become,
And, like a quiet man, repent at home?

How different those who now this seat possess!
No idle dreams disturb their happiness:
The Lord who now presides o'er Warwick's towers,
To nobler purpose dedicates his powers:

No deeds of horror fill his soul with fear,
Nor conscience drives him from a home so dear:
The lovely Felice of the present day
Dreads not her lord should from her presence stray;
He feels the charm that binds him to a seat
Where love and honour, joy and duty, meet.

But forty days could Guy his fair afford;
Not forty years would weary Warwick's lord:
He better knows how charms like hers control
All vagrant thoughts, and fill with her the soul;
He better knows that not on mortal strife,
Or deeds of blood, depend the bliss of life;
But on the ties that first the heart enchain,
And every grace that bids the charm remain:
Time will, we know, to beauty work despite,
And youthful bloom will take with him its flight;
But Love shall still subsist, and, undecay'd,
Feel not one change of all that Time has made.

ON A DRAWING OF THE ELM TREE,

UNDER WHICH THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON STOOD SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

Is there one heart that beats on English ground,
One grateful spirit in the kingdoms round:
One who had traced the progress of the foe,
And does not hail the field of Waterloo?

Who o'er that field, if but in thought, has gone,
Without a grateful wish for Wellington?

Within that field of glory rose a Tree
(Which a fair hand has given us here to see),
A noble tree, that, pierced by many a ball,
Fell not — decreed in time of peace to fall:
Nor shall it die unsung; for there shall be
In many a noble verse the praise of thee,
With that heroic chief — renown'd and glorious tree! —

Men shall divide thee, and thy smallest part
Shall be to warm and stir the English heart;
Form'd into shapes as fancy may design,
In all, fair fame and honour shall be thine.
The noblest ladies in the land with joy
Shall own thy value in the slightest toy;
Preserved through life, it shall a treasure prove,
And left to friends, a legacy of love.

And thou, fair semblance of that tree sublime,
Shalt a memorial be to distant time;
Shalt wake a grateful sense in every heart,
And noble thoughts to opening minds impart;
Who shall hereafter learn what deeds were done,
What nations freed by Heaven and Wellington.

Heroic tree we surely this may call —
Wounded it fell, and numbers mourn'd its fall;
It fell for many here, but there it stood for all.

ON RECEIVING FROM A LADY A PRESENT OF A RING.

A RING to me Cecilia sends —
And what to show? — that we are friends;
That she with favour reads my lays,
And sends a token of her praise;
Such as the nun, with heart of snow,
Might on her confessor bestow;
Or which some favourite nymph would pay,
Upon her grandsire's natal day,
And to his trembling hand impart
The offering of a feeling heart.

And what shall I return the fair
And flattering nymph? — A verse? — a prayer?
For were a Ring my present too,
I see the smile that must ensue; —
The smile that pleases though it stings,
And says — "No more of giving rings:
Remember, thirty years are gone,
Old friend! since you presented one!"

Well! one there is, or one shall be,
To give a ring instead of me;
And with it sacred vows for life
To love the fair — the angel-wife;
In that one act may every grace,
And every blessing have their place —
And give to future hours the bliss,
The charm of life, derived from this;

And when even love no more supplies —
When weary nature sinks to rest; —
May brighter, steadier light arise,
And make the parting moment blest!

TO A LADY, WITH SOME POETICAL EXTRACTS.

SAY, shall thine eye, and with the eye the mind,
Dwell on a work for thee alone design'd?
Traced by my hand, selected by my heart,
Will it not pleasure to a friend impart;
And her dear smile an ample payment prove
For this light labour of aspiring love?

Read, but with partial mind, the themes I choose:
A friend transcribes, and let a friend peruse:
This shall a charm to every verse impart,
And the cold line shall reach the willing heart:
For willing hearts the tamest song approve,
All read with pleasure when they read with love.

There are no passions to the Muse unknown, —
Fear, sorrow, hope, joy, pity are her own:
She gives to each the strength, the tone, the power,
By varying moods to suit the varying hour;
She plays with each, and veils in changing robes
The grief she pities, and the love she probes.

'T is hers for wo the sullen smile to feign,
And Laughter lend to Envy's rankling pain;
Soft Pity's look to Scorn, mild Friendship's to Disdain.
Joy inexpressive with her tear she veils,
And weeps her transport, where expression fails.

TO A LADY ON LEAVING HER AT SIDMOUTH.

Yes! I must go — it is a part
That cruel Fortune has assign'd me, —
Must go, and leave, with aching heart,
What most that heart adores, behind me.

Still I shall see thee on the sand
Till o'er the space the water rises,
Still shall in thought behind thee stand,
And watch the look affection prizes.

But ah! what youth attends thy side,
With eyes that speak his soul's devotion —
To thee as constant as the tide
That gives the restless wave its motion?

Still in thy train must he appear,
For ever gazing, smiling, talking?
Oh! would that he were sighing here,
And I were there beside thee, walking!

Wilt thou to him that arm resign,
Who is to that dear heart a stranger,
And with those matchless looks of thine
The peace of this poor youth endanger?

Away this fear that fancy makes
When night and death's dull image hide thee:
In sleep, to thee my mind awakes;
Awake, it sleeps to all beside thee.

Who could in absence bear the pain
Of all this fierce and jealous feeling,
But for the hope to meet again,
And see those smiles all sorrow healing?

Then shall we meet, and, heart to heart,
Lament that fate such friends should sever,
And I shall say — "We must not part;"
And thou wilt answer — "Never, never!"

TO SARAH, COUNTESS OF JERSEY, ON HER BIRTHDAY.

Of all the subjects poetry commands,
Praise is the hardest nicely to bestow;
'Tis like the streams in Afric's burning sands,
Exhausted now, and now they overflow.
As heaping fuel on a kindling fire,
So deals a thoughtless poet with his praise;
For when he would the cheerful warmth inspire,
He chokes the very thing he hopes to raise.

How shall I, then, the happy medium hit,
And give the just proportion to my song?
How speak of beauty, elegance, and wit,
Yet fear at once t' offend thee and to wrong?
Sure to offend, if far the Muse should soar,
And sure to wrong thee if her strength I spare;
Still, in my doubts, this comfort I explore —
That all confess what I must not declare.

Yet, on this day, in every passing year,
Poets the tribute of their praise may bring;
Nor should thy virtues then be so severe,
As to forbid us of thy worth to sing.
Still I forbear: for why should I portray
Those looks that seize — that mind that wins the heart —
Since all the world, on this propitious day,
Will tell how lovely and how good thou art.

TO A LADY WHO DESIRED SOME VERSES AT PARTING.

Oh! do not ask the Muse to show
Or how we met, or how we part:
The bliss, the pain, too well I know,
That seize in turn this faithful heart.
That meeting — it was tumult all —
The eye was pleased, the soul was glad;
But thus to memory I recall,
And feel the parting doubly sad.

Yes, it was pleasant so to meet
For us, who fear'd to meet no more,
When every passing hour was sweet —
Sweeter, we thought, than all before.
When eye from eye new meanings steal,
When hearts approach, and thoughts unite —
Then is, indeed, the time to feel,
But, Laura! not a time to write.

And when at length compell'd to part,
When fear is strong, and fancy weak,
When in some distant good the heart
For present ease is forced to seek, —
When hurried spirits fall and rise,
As on the changing views we dwell,
How vainly then the sufferer tries
In studied verse his pains to tell!

Time brings, indeed, his slow relief,
In whom the passions live and die;
He gives the bright'ning smile to grief,
And his the soft consoling sigh:
Till then, we vainly wish the power
To paint the grief, or use the pen:
But distant far that quiet hour;
And I must feel and grieve till then.

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

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